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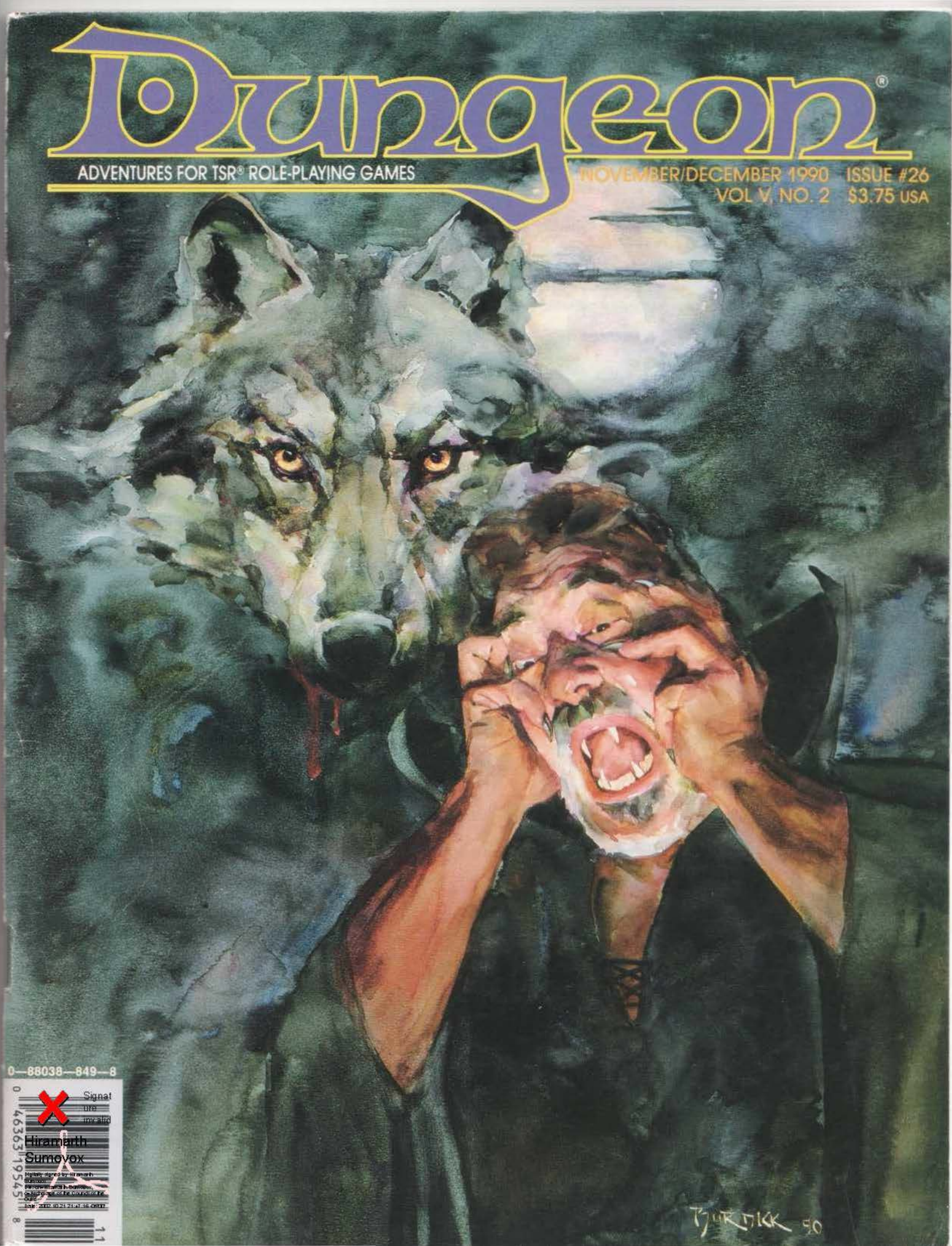
VOL V, NO. 2 $3.75 USA



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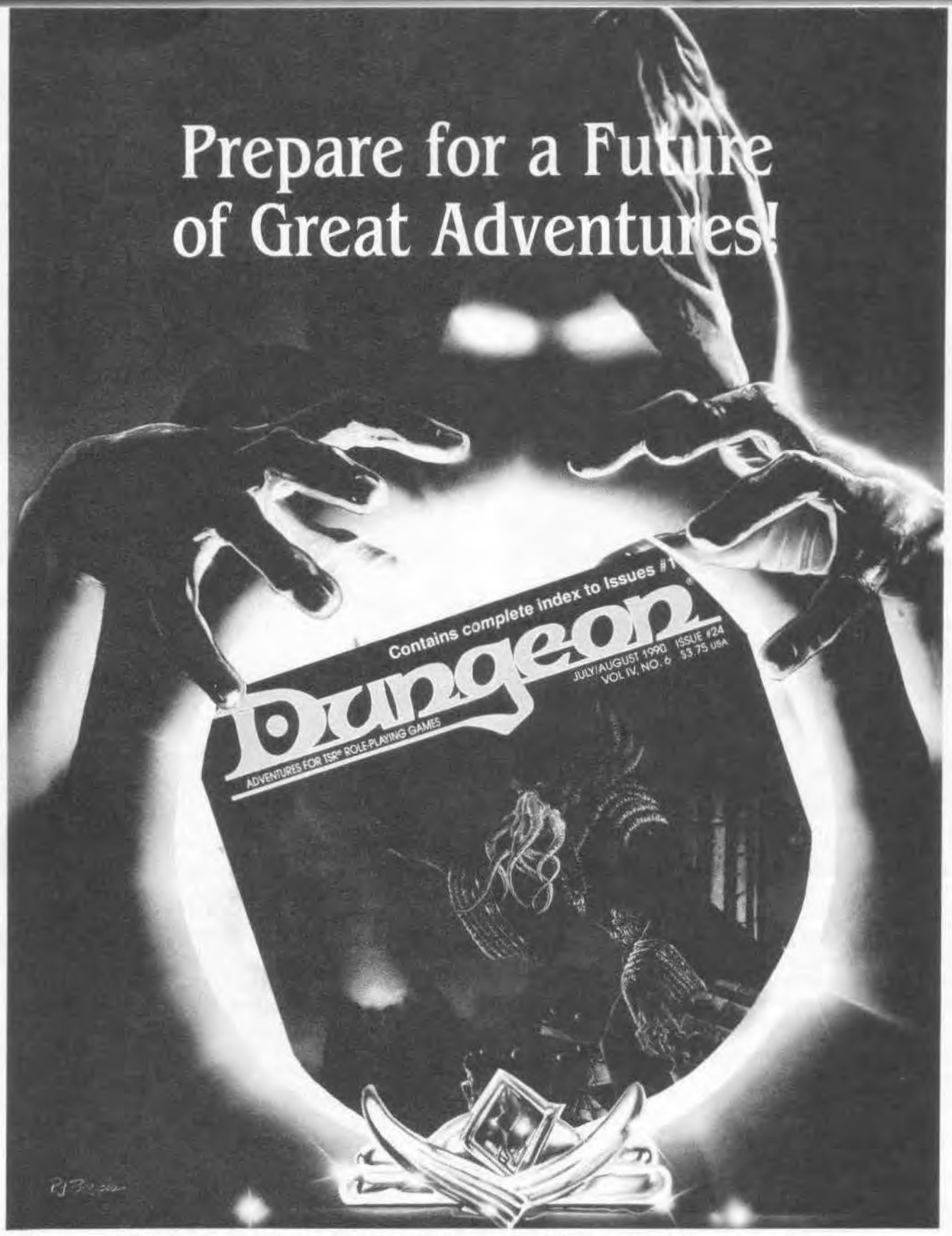
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DUNGEON®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1990 ISSUE #26

COVER: Artist Scott Burdick's cover illustration shows that even a powerful mage can lose control when lycanthropy mixed with possession becomes "Nine-Tenths of the Law."

Shaking Things Up

Last issue I talked about some of the changes we've been making in DUNGEON Adventures—changes for the better, we hope. The inclusion in issue #25 of an adventure for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game drew a strong response from readers, with the vote about evenly split between those in favor of including modules for other TSR games and those who would prefer to keep DUNGEON magazine exclusively for D&D®/AD&D® material.

This issue we shake things up again, and again invite your comments. John Terra (who wrote "Rank Amateurs" in issue #22) has given us "Operation: Fire Sale," a TOP SECRET S.I.™ adventure set in the constantly changing political climate of Germany. By the time you read this, East and West Germany should have come even closer to becoming one country (all-German elections are scheduled for December). We promised John that next time he can write about a less-volatile area of the world (want to tackle the Persian Gulf?).

In response to requests for very short encounters that can be dropped into your campaigns without much fuss, we've included "Deadfalls on Nightwood Trail," the first of a new two-page feature. We'd like to have a catchy name for this feature (we've been calling it "The Mini-Module"), so here's your chance to win fame and fortune—well, at least a nice prize. Send us your suggestions. The idea we like best will become the feature name, and the person who submits the winning idea will receive a set of four ceramic mugs emblazoned with both the DUNGEON Adventures and DRAGON® Magazine logos.

This issue's quote was submitted by Bill Birdsall of Plattsburg AFB, New York.

Barbara G. Young

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People could survive their natural trouble all right if it weren't for the trouble they make for themselves.

Ogden Nash

Vol. V, No. 2

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LETTERS

Moonmelons Demystified

I am writing to tell you about the great job you are doing with the magazine. I have no complaints about the new cover, and I think that having different types of adventures in the magazine is a great idea.

I have just one question. On page 26 of issue #25 ("Of Kings Unknown"), you stated in the second paragraph that "The effects of the moonmelon are permanent . . . unless magically cured by a *heal* spell." In the same paragraph you say ". . . they [the alterations] are all permanent whether harmful or helpful and cannot be altered by *heal* spells." Like, whoa, did I miss something?

Jay West
Bramalea, Ontario

You didn't miss anything, but we didn't make the point clear. The effects of moonmelons on the parents who eat them can be cured by a heal *spell before they produce moonoffspring. Once these mutated offspring are born, their alterations are permanent and cannot be cured by* heal *spells.*

So Start Writing!

First of all, congratulations on an excellent job so far! I enjoy DUNGEON® Magazine immensely. Judging by the quality of the published scenarios, your selection criteria have proven to be highly successful. However, pleasing all the people all the time, obviously, does not happen, as evident by the letters you print. I wish to say something to all those readers who complain that you are not publishing enough of the types of modules they wish to see.

The good folks at DUNGEON Adventures can only publish the quality dungeons (emphasis on *quality*) that they receive. So don't ask those hard-working folks to print what they *haven't* received. Instead, ask your friends, neighbors, and especially other readers to submit more of the types of dungeons you wish to see published.

I hope this message will help to alleviate some of the same old replies you have to write every other month.

By the way, I would like to see more of . . . the same high-quality material you have been publishing for the past four years.

Wayne M. Kalliomaa
Lancaster, California

See, every once in a while we do publish a noncritical letter.

Yes, Sir, That's My Baby

None of my friends believe that my mom is the editor of DUNGEON Magazine because you have a different last name than I do. You have to print something that proves that you're my mother.

Your daughter,
Sarah Deer

Yes, that's my kid—red hair, freckles, and all.

Glowglobe Coverup

I found a few points of contention with the module "In the Dread of Night" (issue #24) by Anne Dupuis. I noted that it had boxed descriptions (I'm highly in favor of them), but there is a problem beginning with room 5. The last sentence of that description reads, "There is no *glowglobe* here." This description, to be read to the players, explains the function of the strange globes in the previous rooms. It is doubtful that the PCs would have discovered by this time that the only function of the globes was to provide light. Instead, the party may view them as scrying devices, sources of heat, traps, etc. By revealing the name (and thus the function) of the globes, part of the mystery has been banished. Additionally, the boxed text for room 6 mentions a portable *glowglobe*, revealing to the party that the globes can be portable.

It may be tedious for the DM to say "another of the strange glowing spheres is perched atop the counter," but that provides much more realism.

Moving along to "A Hitch in Time" by Willie Walsh, I have only one complaint (which is ever so rare, as Mr. Walsh's work is very impressive). My complaint is that there are too many sudden-death traps in the module. Granted, in the setting generally assumed by AD&D® adventures, the possibility of death is very real. But I highly frown on events which consist of "saving throw or die" situations. Players have worked long and hard on their characters, slowly building them up in power and equipment. It can ruin a game when one unlucky die roll ends everything on the spot. I am not totally against such events, but the frequency of them in this adventure makes it unplayable in my campaign. I counted seven: the youth statue (not death, but complete uselessness is close enough), the venerable statue, the ledges (falling and drowning are risks), the *repulsion* door, box F in room 9 (equivalent to a *cloak of poisonousness*), box G (not even a save on this one!), and box G again if the heart is destroyed. This last is even more unreasonable in that the death cannot be reversed, "even by divine intervention." While divine action in my campaigns is very rare, a deity's power should be able to reverse *any* event, should the characters manage to convince one to listen.

I sincerely thank you for including advertising in DUNGEON Adventures. I'm sure you'll get many comments from readers who are upset that you "ruined" the magazine by including advertising, but I am acutely aware of the rising costs of printing, and am grateful that you chose to allow advertising instead of increasing the price.

Continued on page 15

DUNGEON® (ISSN 0890-7102) is published bimonthly by TSR, Inc. 201 Sheridan Springs Rd., Lake Geneva, WI 53147. The mailing address for all material except subscription orders is DUNGEON, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147; telephone (414) 248-3625.

Subscriptions: Subscription rates via second-class mail are as follows: $18 in U.S. funds for six issues sent to an address in the U.S. or Canada; $36 in U.S. funds for surface mail delivery to any other address, and $52 in U.S. funds for air mail delivery to any other address. Prices are subject to change without notice. Payment in full must accompany all subscription orders. Payment should be by check or money order, made payable to TSR, Inc., or by charges to valid MasterCard or VISA credit cards. Send subscription orders with payments to: TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 5695, Boston MA 02206. The issue of expiration of each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change, in order to assure uninterrupted delivery.

Back issues: Limited back issues of this magazine are available from the TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. For a copy of the current mail-order catalog, write to the above address.

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THE INHERITANCE

BY PAUL F. CULOTTA

You just got a castle! And now for the bad news....

Artwork by Ken Widing

Paul is a lieutenant colonel in the Army National Guard assigned to the Pentagon (which inspired the military organization of the hobgoblins in this adventure). He is also an attorney and an avid AD&D® game player and DM. Paul's wife, Shari, and son, Todd, playtest his modules with help from the cats, Boo and Sasha, who chase the dice that roll off the table.

"The Inheritance" is an AD&D adventure for 6-8 characters of levels 1-3 (about 13 total levels). The well-balanced adventuring party should contain at least two fighters (one preferably a ranger) and one cleric. One of the characters should have no other relatives except a long-lost uncle (or other relative who has been missing for a while).

The adventure can be adapted to any game world but is written for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® fantasy setting. The DM can use FR1 *Waterdeep and the North* and FR5 *The Savage Frontier* to add flavor and suitable random encounters. If another setting is desired, the DM can choose any large city within a week's ride of a mysterious forest.

The stakes involved in this module are high for a low-level party; the character who has no other living relatives has inherited a small keep from a long-lost uncle. To realize the inheritance, however, the keep must be seized from an unfriendly band of hobgoblins. Moreover, the uncle specialized in illusionist magic, and the keep itself has its share of challenging traps and obstacles. (Note: Hereafter the deceased is referred to in the text simply as "Uncle." During the course of the adventure, the DM should assign an appropriate name consistent with the PC's background.)

Adventure Background

The adventure starts in Waterdeep, with the PCs looking for adventure. At a suitable time, one of the PCs notices a guard posting an official proclamation in some public place:

> **NOTICE**
>
> Legal notice is hereby given that, unless the last known heirs of [DM inserts name recognizable by one of the PCs as Uncle] come forth,

his keep and all possessions shall escheat to the Lords of Waterdeep forever without any further claims by said heirs. Claims must be filed no later than two weeks from the date of this notice, and the provisions of the will fulfilled within 30 days. Persons claiming to be heirs should apply to the honorable Court of the undersigned.

Dated this _____ day of _____.
Hargrove Seedius, Magister of Waterdeep

As indicated on page 17 of FR1 *Waterdeep and the North*, a magister is one of the judges who administer the laws of the City (there are no lawyers). Accordingly, Seedius's court should not be difficult to find; the DM should place it somewhere within the Castle Ward of Waterdeep. Likewise, it should not be difficult for the PC heir to prove his relationship to the deceased (the magister may suggest that the PC secure official birth and death records maintained by one of the temples, for example). The DM should make this part of the adventure a good role-playing opportunity for the players.

After lineage has been established, Magister Seedius relates the following:

"Your uncle's body was brought into town by a group of merchants from the North who discovered it along the road just south of Red Larch. He apparently died from an arrow wound. The only possessions on his person were a dagger, a pouch with 20 gold pieces, a pen, an empty ink pot, and an old bill of sale.

"The merchants found his body sitting against a large rock, where he apparently wrote out his will on the back of the bill of sale. When he ran out of ink, he finished it with his own blood. That makes it a holographic will, one written entirely in the handwriting of the deceased, and it is legally acceptable even though it is not witnessed.

"The will's conditions are somewhat unusual, but they are legally binding on the heirs of the estate. If the conditions are not fulfilled, the keep and all its possessions become forfeit to the Lords of Waterdeep. You have only thirty days before I must make my final judgment on the estate. I will now read the will. Please listen carefully to ensure you understand what must be done."

LAST WILL OF _____.

I, [DM insert Uncle's full name]*, lie dying from a foul arrow. Invaders came in the night, assaulted my keep by surprise, and killed all my retainers. These monsters were similar to orcs but fought more fiercely and had in their service a large, red-eyed beast that threw my men-at-arms about like toys. I barely got out my secret door, but not before one of the creatures shot me in the back.*

I leave all my property, both real and personal, to any living heir who avenges me by ridding my wonderful home of these foul creatures no later than 60 days after my death. It is my direction that this be done by my heir without help from any but his or her closest companions, so that my heir may prove worthy of the treasure I leave behind and which I trust the monsters have not found.

Avenge me!

"I haven't been able to find out much about your uncle. He was a recluse who dabbled in illusionist magic. A couple of times a year, he would go into Red Larch for supplies. He married a woman from that town, but that is all that is known about him. Apparently, he was in good standing with the Lords of Waterdeep, because the archives hold a recorded deed from the Lords to the deceased, dated some five years ago. The deed granted him a tract of land 10 miles wide by 10 miles long, centered on the southernmost point of Kryptgarden Forest. The keep was built by a band of dwarves from the North and is somewhere in that area, but exactly where no one is sure; the dwarves have long since departed. Good luck on your quest!"

For the Dungeon Master

As the magister has implied, Uncle was an illusionist. Some years ago, he saved the life of one of the Lords of Waterdeep and was rewarded with a grant of land, money, and the commissioning of a modest keep. The deceased eventually found a wife in Red Larch and took her to the keep, but otherwise kept to himself. The wife died two years ago in childbirth, and the baby with her.

Two months ago, a raiding patrol of the Lostafinga hobgoblin tribe (see sidebar) discovered the keep and mounted a surprise assault at night. Moving quietly, they negotiated the moat obstacles and, with the help of their pet (a giant carnivorous ape), they quickly got over the walls and overcame the watch. Uncle barely managed to escape through a secret door just after a hobgoblin arrow caught him in the back.

For several days Uncle wandered toward Red Larch in search of aid, but the arrow wound took its toll. Just before he died, he wrote out his last will. After the body was found and brought into Waterdeep, it was cremated.

The main hobgoblin tribe has not moved into the keep but uses it as an outpost from which to mount raids against any caravans or merchants that wander by. The keep is currently held by a contingent of 21 hobgoblins and one ape. The tribe's chieftain, safely laired in Kryptgarden Forest, rotates a new troop of hobgoblins to the keep every 40 days to patrol the southern part of the forest. Since the troops are rotated, there are no hobgoblin females or children in the keep. Also, the monsters have not discovered the main treasure that the deceased left behind.

The DM should allow the PCs to make any necessary preparations but should enforce the terms of the will strictly—the heir and his party have only 30 days to get to the keep, get it cleaned out with no outside assistance, and get back to file proof of their conquest. Proof can take any number of forms (bringing back the hobgoblin standard, making sworn statements before the magister and a cleric with a *detect lie* spell, etc.)

The Keep

Travel to the keep should not be much of a problem until the adventurers turn off the main road and head toward Kryptgarden Forest (see Waterdeep and the North map). From then on, the DM should check four times a day for a random encounter (twice during daylight and twice at night). There is a base 1-in-10 chance on each check for a random encounter. The DM can use the "Temperate Rough or Hilly" encounter table found in the *Monstrous Compendium*, Volume Three, or substitute encounters of his own.

The keep itself is about a half mile inside Kryptgarden Forest in the middle of a clearing atop a small hill. The clearing is about 250' in diameter, and the keep is square with walls about 100' long and surrounded by a moat. No main building or wall towers can be seen, but there is a gatehouse in the middle of the southern wall. At the gatehouse is a drawbridge that is currently raised.

From the forest, the PCs should be able to see the walls and gatehouse as well as several humanoid figures patrolling along the walls. If the PCs view the northwest corner, they can see three spears planted, tips out, in the keep side of the moat ditch. PCs who climb trees to get a better look can see the standard in the courtyard and can also see that the moat appears empty. They may also view any other additional activity the DM wishes to improvise (e.g., a changing of the guard, a small hobgoblin fetching water, etc.).

The Hobgoblin Troop

The particular troop of hobgoblins currently assigned here is the second group of Lostafingas to occupy the keep (the ones that conquered it were rotated to other duties). It is under the command of **Lieutenant Julla** (hp 19), who was recently commissioned by his sub-chief. This is Julla's first assignment as a lieutenant, and he wants to do well. He suspects that the keep's owner must have had more treasure than was found and believes that it must be somewhere in the living room or study (areas 21 or 22). Thus, he has put those rooms off limits to everyone else in the troop. Julla knows that if he can find the treasure he will win great honor with his sub-chief. Julla is vain, arrogant, and unrelenting in battle. He wears a necklace with 15 fingers on it (from 10 humans, one half-elf, and four orcs).

Julla is assisted by his two sergeants, **Smut** and **Cheff** (hp 15 each). They carry out his orders grudgingly because they believe that the lieutenant is an inexperienced greenhorn who could get lost with a map and a lodestone. They also resent Julla's order that puts part of the keep off limits, and they suspect that he wants to find the missing treasure himself. Both sergeants are ambitious and, in time of battle, it would not be surprising if Lieutenant Julla died at their hands (50% chance if the battle is going the hobgoblins' way). Neither sergeant will betray the troop, however. Smut has a necklace with 25 fingers (12 human and 13 orc), and Cheff has a necklace with 22 fingers (14 human, one elf, two half-elf, and five orc).

The rank-and-file troops are bored with manning the keep. They are suspicious of Lieutenant Julla's orders and they wonder why they haven't been out on more patrols to find loot (as well as fingers!). This morale problem works against the adventurers, however, because the hobgoblins consider a fight a welcome change of pace. They will plow right into a melee and not surrender (it's the Lostafinga way, after all).

Veterans of the troop use nicknames (assigned by the sergeants) for each other. These nicknames are based on some habit, appearance, or deed. Real names are used for the rookies until the sergeants come up with a fitting nickname. Sergeants and officers are always referred to by rank and real name.

One trooper with no nickname is **Grinkle** (Int 10, hp 4), a poor excuse of a wimpy hobgoblin who was made a warrior only due to his father's influence with the chief. Julla uses Grinkle

as an aide to fetch his food and drink and to clean up after him. More information about Grinkle is found in the description of area 18. Grinkle has a necklace with one finger on it (from a halfling), and most of the troop believe that he got that as a gift from his father. Grinkle speaks Common and carries his family's third-best long sword.

Rat-Nose, Chowhound, and **Snurt** (hp 7 each), the troop's three archers, are tough soldiers who take their job seriously. They are well disciplined and are the most likely to object to criticism of their superiors. Most of the other troopers resent this attitude and think that the archers are trying to get extra favors. Rat-Nose gets his name from his particularly long and sensitive nose. He has a necklace with eight fingers (seven human and one orc). Chowhound's name

The Lostafinga Hobgoblin Tribe

There are many fell creatures in the savage frontier of the Forgotten Realms, and not the least among them are the hobgoblins of the Lostafinga tribe. For many years they have disrupted the land near the northern and central parts of Kryptgarden Forest by ambushing trade caravans, driving off settlers and woodsmen, and attacking anyone unfortunate enough to encounter them. The tribe, ruled by a huge hobgoblin chieftain named Shar-Kee, numbers around 500 males, 400 females, and 600 children. Highly disciplined and well-organized, the Lostafingas are ruthless in battle and do not surrender.

The Lostafingas are distinctive in dress, appearance, and tactics. Survivors (there are few) of ambushed caravans report that these hobgoblins achieve complete surprise because they paint their skin and armor with colored pigments that blend with the natural terrain. Thus, a peaceful woodland may suddenly erupt with a frenzied surprise attack of snarling hobgoblins and well-trained rampaging carnivorous apes (the tribe has 20 of these creatures). The only hint of such an ambush is the dead silence that surrounds the hobgoblins' position (the birds and other animals have fled the area).

The name "Lostafinga" comes from the exploits of one Gar-Nu-Kee, a distant ancestor of the current chief. According to tribal legend, Gar-Nu-Kee led the tribe on its trek from the mountains of the far north to a promised land revealed to him by Maglubiyet, god of the hobgoblins. Upon arrival in Kryptgarden, the tribe was accosted by a huge ancient green dragon (named Krazel) and her three children. The dragons demanded regular hobgoblin sacrifices to satisfy their hunger in exchange for the tribe's right to live in the forest.

Even though refusal meant certain annihilation, Gar-Nu-Kee bravely stepped forward and told the dragon that its demand was foolish since hobgoblins were tough, stringy, and tasted awful. Furious, Krazel knocked down the insulting hobgoblin, told him that she would be the judge of that, and then took a nibble—Gar-Nu-Kee's left pinky finger. It tasted as bad as he had predicted, and the dragon spat it out and released him. Gar-Nu-Kee then negotiated an arrangement with Krazel whereby they would live in harmony by providing mutual security, with the hobgoblins providing "tasty" (i.e., non-hobgoblin) sacrifices to the dragons from time to time.

Based on this legend, the hobgoblins took the name "Lostafinga" for their tribe in honor of Gar-Nu-Kee's courage, cunning, and sacrifice. They also started the ritual of severing the left small finger from a dead foe in the belief (encouraged by the tribal shamans) that doing so transports the soul of the dead one to Maglubiyet for service as a slave for eternity. Because of this practice, all Lostafinga warriors carry a small hand axe in addition to their normal weapons.

Females hobgoblins learn to mummify these severed fingers and make necklaces of them. These are worn openly, because the more fingers a warrior has on his necklace, the higher esteem (called "spug" by the hobgoblins) he has from his peers. Unusually large fingers (such as from giants, ogres, etc.) are not worn but are pickled and displayed proudly in hobgoblin lairs. There are few of these curios for obvious reasons.

Legends are based largely on truth, and there is some evidence to the Lostafinga legend. There have been occasional reports of green dragons seen around Kryptgarden Forest. The Lostafingas have never demanded ransom for any captives. Heavily armed contingents have gone into the woods but only one lone survivor has come out. He was insane and incoherently raved about the jaws of the "big, green worm."

Adventurers who brave the depths of Kryptgarden Forest are likely to find out how much of the legend is true and how much is not. One thing is certain: the Lostafingas and their allies will provide stiff opposition.

Lostafinga hobgoblins differ slightly from those listed in *Monstrous Compendium*. They are organized into troops of 22 hobgoblins, each of which includes a lieutenant and two sergeants. A troop on an independent mission usually also includes a carnivorous ape and its handler. Five troops (a company) are commanded by a sub-chief. They are all ruled over by Shar-Kee, the chief of the tribe.

Hobgoblin trooper: Int 8; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35; MC.

Hobgoblin sergeant: HD 1+1; hp 9; Dmg by weapon type (long sword); XP 40; other statistics as for hobgoblin trooper.

Hobgoblin lieutenant: AC 4; HD 2; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (long sword, whip); SA +2 on damage rolls due to strength; XP 45; other statistics as for hobgoblin sergeant.

Hobgoblin sub-chief: Int 9; AC 3; HD 3; hp 16; THACO 17; #AT 1; XP 65; other statistics as for hobgoblin lieutenant.

Shar-Kee (chief): Int 10; AC 2; HD 4; hp 22; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (*long sword +2, morning star +1*); SA +3 on damage rolls due to strength; XP 175; *banded armor +2*; other statistics as for hobgoblin sub-chief.

is the result of his habit of looting food before treasure. His necklace contains four human, one gnome, and three orc fingers. Snurt, the rookie, is still known by his real name. He does not have a necklace but is anxious to earn his first finger.

The archers can attack twice per round with their long bows (Dmg 1-6/1-6) or can close to attack once per round with their long swords (Dmg 1-8). They don't carry treasure about with them.

The infantry troopers are **Boar-Breath, Strong-Thrust, Scratchy, Deathstar, Smasher, Lucky, Fumble-foot** (hp 7 each), **Bear-Killer, Ringo, Backtalk, Jurmane, Slyfund,** and **Gar-Nuuk-Ko** (hp 6 each). These are Julla's shock troops, the bad guys who wade in after the archers have warmed up the opposition with a few arrows. For all of the sergeants' faults, they have trained these infantry hobgoblins into very good fighters with halberds and morning stars. They have also started them training with the archers to improve their skills.

The infantry troops are fairly well disciplined (except for Backtalk) although they have suspicions and doubts about Lieutenant Julla. They pride themselves on bravery and being "spug" (the hobgoblin equivalent of macho). As a result, fights break out every now and then. Although great at fighting and looting, they are not the best housekeepers. Except for the rookies, each has a necklace with 2-8 fingers of various types (one of Bear-Killer's is a finger from a black bear paw).

Monkey-Love (hp 8), the ape handler, got his nickname from the great care he gives Redeye, his carnivorous ape. Any hobgoblin who makes a crack about Monkey-Love's pet runs the risk of becoming the object of a spontaneous game of "toss the hobgoblin." No one except a naive rookie would ever tease Monkey-Love. The infantry troops agree that, if Monkey-Love had to make a choice between feeding Redeye and the rest of the troop, he would feed the ape. Monkey-Love has a necklace of nine fingers (six human and three orc) and he also wears a belt of 50 fingers from enemies that Redeye has slain in battle (33 human, 12 orc, one elf, one dwarf, and three half-elf). He carries a well-used morning star.

The huge ape, Redeye, got his name not from his appearance (although his eyes are red), but from the time that Chowhound slipped him a small tun of wine from a looted caravan (Monkey-Love had been knocked unconscious in the battle). The troop took great glee at the ape's antics until Monkey-Love came to, and then it took both Smut and Cheff to pull him off Chowhound. It took Redeye and Chowhound two days to recover (the ape from his drink and Chowhound from his lumps).

Redeye (carnivorous ape): Int low; AL N; AC 6; MV 12 (9 in trees); HD 5; hp 36; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-8; SA throw victim into pit (see details at area 13); SD +2 bonus to surprise; SZ L; ML 11; XP 175; MC.

The DM should note that, in addition to the hobgoblins' listed weapons, each carries the ritual hand axe (Dmg 1-6/1-4).

Hobgoblin Defense Plan

Since hobgoblins have infravision and can fight without penalty in daylight, they go on alert and attack at any bold approach by the adventurers. There is very little cover or concealment for a hidden approach. Presumably, the PCs will remember Uncle's words in the will about his secret door and look for it instead of entering through the main gate.

Only a very strong party of adventurers will succeed in a direct assault, because the hobgoblins have a good defense procedure. In the event that the PCs try to assault the keep, a gong alarm sounds in the gatehouse. Use the descriptions of the ground level and upper level of the keep and rouse the hobgoblins in the sequence indicated below (monsters from the lower level all emerge from area 7):

Round 1. Three armored hobgoblins in area 6 awaken the other nine that are sleeping. Lieutenant Julla, in area 19, gets a saving throw vs. spells. If the roll is successful, he comes out of his trance. If not, he gets another roll each round until he saves or the fight on the upper level quiets down. If he comes to, he will arrive two rounds after he is freed from the mirror's curse.

Round 2. The three armored hobgoblins from area 6 come out and go to the walls.

Round 3. No hobgoblins arrive in this round.

Round 4. Grinkle (area 18) arrives. Grinkle hides in shadows or darkness and will throw his lot in with the side that gains the upper hand. The nine other hobgoblins from area 6 have donned their armor and come out.

Round 5. Monkey-Love and Redeye (area 13) arrive along with Backtalk (area 15).

Round 6. If the PCs are not on the walls, the portcullis is raised and the drawbridge lowered. Julla leads most of the hobgoblins and the ape out of the keep to destroy the party.

Round 7. The two sergeants from area 21 arrive.

Upper Level

1. Perimeter Wall. Rat-Nose and Chowhound patrol the 20'-high walls. They are quite alert, and nothing less than *invisible* characters can approach the wall without detection. The wall is block masonry, built up 4' above the level of the walkway. Set into the northern wall is a 15'-tall smokestack that emits smoke from area 6 and the lower level fireplaces. If they are attacked while behind the walls, the hobgoblins' armor class is reduced to 3.

2. Gatehouse. This 20′ × 40′ room above the entry to the keep is manned by Snurt, who observes the approach to the drawbridge at all times. During the day, adventurers can see smoke coming from the small chimney of this structure; at night, faint light shines through the window slits. Like the two sentries on the walls, the hobgoblin here is alert. If intruders are detected, Snurt clangs a metal gong inside the gatehouse to alert the rest of the troop. He also keeps a pot of oil simmering and ready to pour down the murder holes located directly above the drawbridge (Dmg 3-18 to those in the 10′ × 20′ below, save vs. breath weapon for half damage). If attacked by someone outside the gatehouse, Snurt's armor class is reduced to 1.

Ground Level

3. Moat. The moat is 10′ deep. It drops off steeply on the forest side, but there is a gentler slope on the side nearest the keep. The moat appears empty, but Uncle implanted numerous heavy spears tips out in the embankment, and then made them *invisible.* Three of these spears are visible in the northwest corner of the moat, where the hobgoblins first tried to sneak in. Any PC moving up the far side toward the wall has a 1-in-4 chance of running into a spear (1-in-2 chance if running) and taking 1-6 hp damage. Anyone knocked or pushed off the wall has a 1-in-3 chance of hitting a spear in addition to the 2d6 hp damage from the fall.

4. Drawbridge and Portcullis. The drawbridge is presently up and the portcullis is down. The drawbridge is solidly built of wood and can be opened or closed by a wheel and chains at location 4A. The portcullis is made of iron bars and can be raised or lowered by the wheel and chains at location 4B.

5. Stable. This once held Uncle's livestock, but now all that's left is one sorry-looking pony on the verge of starvation. An *animal friendship* spell will automatically work with her. The one cart remaining in the stable is in good operating condition.

6. Guard Barracks. Successful listening at the door reveals muttered talking and snoring. A dozen hobgoblin troopers share this room furnished with bunk beds, a table and chairs, and a fireplace. The room is in disarray. All of the beds are unmade; the floor hasn't been swept in a long time; and weapons, shields, and other junk are strewn about. Nine of the hobgoblins are sleeping, and three (Deathstar, Lucky, and Jurmane) are sitting at the table playing some game with sticks, bones, and stones. These three are fully armored and awaiting their shift on guard duty on the wall. The others have removed their armor and are sleeping soundly.

If the adventurers burst in, the hobgoblins are automatically surprised. The sleeping ones wake up after the initial round and grab the closest weapons at hand. All the hobgoblins fight fiercely and will not surrender. Unarmored hobgoblins have an armor class of 10.

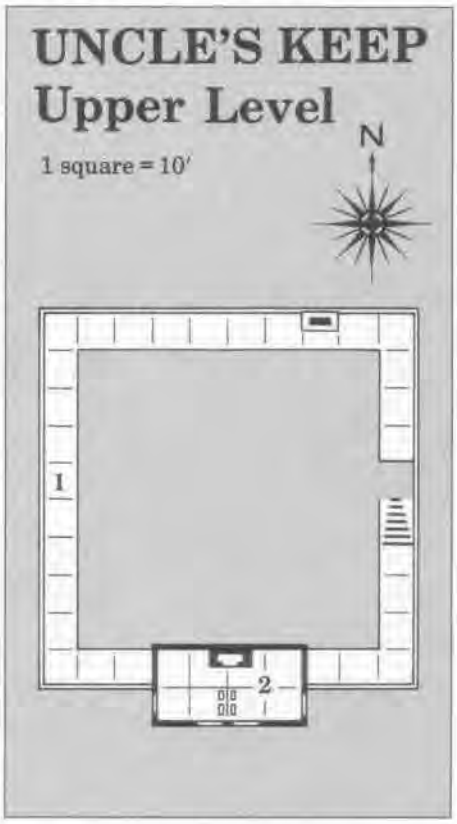
If alerted by the guard in the gatehouse, the three armored hobgoblins spend one round waking the other nine, then go outside to man the walls. The nine remaining hobgoblins take three additional rounds to buckle on their armor, grab weapons, etc., before emerging to assist.

Searching through the hobgoblins' belongings yields a total of 30 gp and 121 sp.

7. Well Room. Stairs going down to the lower level (area 14) take up the western part of this 25′ × 25′ room. In the southeast corner is a 4′-diameter well with a bucket and rope nearby. The well shaft goes down 60′ to a pure underground spring. The door in the northeast corner leads out to the courtyard (area 9).

8. Midden. In the southern part of this 25′ × 25′ room is a stone ledge with three apertures for dumping waste. The smell here is very bad.

9. Courtyard. The courtyard is paved stone with grass growing between the cracks. One paving stone at the center of the yard has been torn out, and an ugly standard has been planted in the ground. It is a dirty mustard-yellow cloth banner emblazoned with a picture of a grisly, hairy hand that is missing its pinky finger. This is the troop standard of the Lostafinga tribe. Taking it back to Waterdeep and showing it to Magister Seedius will serve as proof that the conditions of the will have been fulfilled.



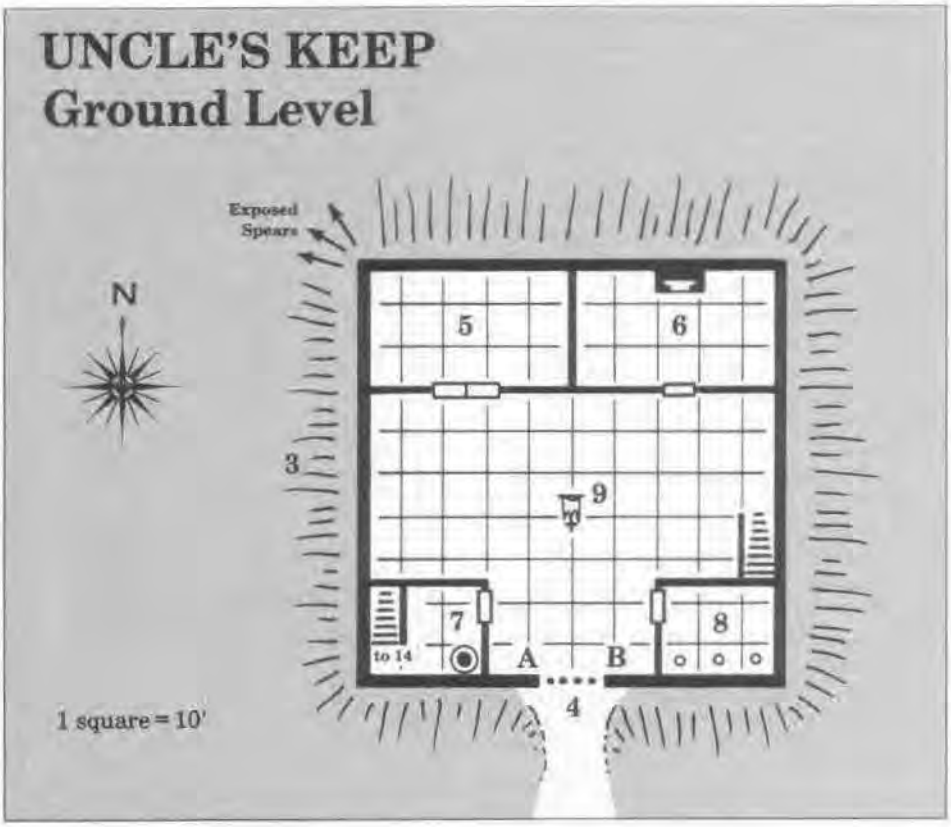
Mausoleum and Lower Level

10. The Mausoleum. East of the keep and about 500′ into the forest is another clearing that contains a small stone mausoleum with no windows and one door. South of this building are a small shrine to the goddess Mystra and two graves. The door of the mausoleum is made of heavy wood and bound with silver bands and hinges. It is also locked with a large iron lock, and someone has written on the door in hobgoblin: "Keep Out! Danger! This means you, stupid!"

Inspection of the tombstones on the graves reveals the names of Uncle's wife from Red Larch and that of a child. The dates of death are the same.

In the northeast corner of the mausoleum is a massive stone coffin that at one time was apparently bound by silver bands; they are now broken open. The lid to the crypt is propped against the crypt itself. In the northwest corner are some pieces of rusting armor, a broken halberd, and some bones. Hiding behind the coffin is a ghoul.

If the door to this room is entered after sunset, the ghoul inside immediately emerges and attacks, fighting



until destroyed. If before sunset, it waits until someone in the party comes up to the coffin before attacking. The ghoul will not leave the mausoleum during daylight hours.

Ghoul: Int low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16; THACO 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC.

The ghoul was a particularly evil lord of Red Larch who was buried alive by the town's citizens hundreds of years ago. In his wickedness, he became a ghoul. After one escape, the ghoul was recaptured (via a *web* spell), and the citizens built this place for him to suffer eternally.

After taking the keep, the hobgoblins found the mausoleum and investigated. When they broke the silver bands holding the stone coffin lid in place, the ghoul burst out and the hobgoblins fled in terror (all but one who was paralyzed; it is his remains that decorate the northwest corner). The silver bands and hinges were enough to keep the ghoul behind the door, and the hobgoblin subchief who conquered the keep ordered the door locked (the original silver lock had been smashed open).

The silver bands are worth 15 gp each, and the hinges and bands on the door are worth 20 gp each. The ghoul has no treasure, and its crypt is empty.

11. Secret Entrance. Just south of the mausoleum is a small shrine to the goddess Mystra on a stone pedestal. Close inspection of the 4'-diameter pedestal reveals a few drops of dried blood. The pedestal can be moved aside easily to reveal a shaft going straight down; built into the side of the shaft is a wooden ladder. This is Uncle's secret escape, and the blood stains are his. The ladder is sturdy and goes down 50'.

12. Tunnel. At the bottom of the shaft is a tunnel that goes due west. The tunnel walls, floor, and ceiling are of shored up with timbers every 10'. It is 5' wide and 8' high. After 650', the tunnel stops abruptly at a masonry wall. There is a secret door here (automatically found due to the many clues and evidence) that leads to area 13. The door pulls open toward the PCs. Successful listening at the secret door (−5% chance due to the thickness of the wall) reveals indistinguishable talking and grunting.

13. Pet Room. This is a 30' × 30' room separated into two halves by a 10'-wide pit. Two boards lie across the pit like a bridge, joining the two sides. On the west side of the pit, a hobgoblin is petting the head of a large ape that is contentedly munching on a piece of meat.

The hobgoblin, Monkey-Love, is surprised automatically. The PCs and Redeye, the ape, should roll for surprise normally (the party will not be surprised if one of the PCs successfully heard noises; the ape gets a +2 bonus to its roll). The PCs may try to knock the hobgoblin or ape into the pit in the center of the room, doing so on a successful to-hit roll on AC 10 plus a successful open doors roll (hobgoblin) or bend bars roll (ape).

If Redeye hits with both hands, he will not bite the victim or inflict rending damage. Instead, he automatically throws the PC into the pit. Being knocked or thrown into the 20'-deep pit inflicts 2-12 hp damage. The monsters fight to the death; they know they are too far away from their comrades to get help. Neither Monkey-Love nor Redeye has any treasure.

On the west side of the room is an unlocked door. The pit can be crossed safely using the boards laid across it as they are quite strong and thick.

Uncle built this room so that he could cross, knock the boards into the pit, and then escape through the secret door while any invaders were delayed. This worked well except that, when the hobgoblins invaded, he was shot in the back with an arrow before he reached this room. Since the invasion, the hobgoblins have retrieved the boards from the pit and use the room to keep Redeye safely in place. Redeye can jump the pit with a 60% chance of success (80% if so ordered by Monkey-Love).

14. Intersection Corridor. This 30' × 20' corridor has an open archway in the south wall. Beyond the archway, a staircase leads up to the ground floor of the keep (area 7). Wooden doors in the west and north wall are unlocked. There are sconces in the walls for holding torches, but they are empty. Listening successfully at the northern door reveals muttered hobgoblin cursing from area 15.

15. Dining Room. This is a large feasting and dining room. Piled on the 30'-long table and stacked on the floor are heaps of dirty dishes, cups, spoons, leftovers, and the aftermath of a frenzied food fight. A lone cursing hobgoblin is busy collecting dishes in a pile. He turns at the sound of the door and tosses the dishes aside. Pulling out a morning star, the creature shouts something in hobgoblin as he attacks. Those who understand the hobgoblin language hear him say, "Oh, good, I didn't want to do the dishes anyway!"

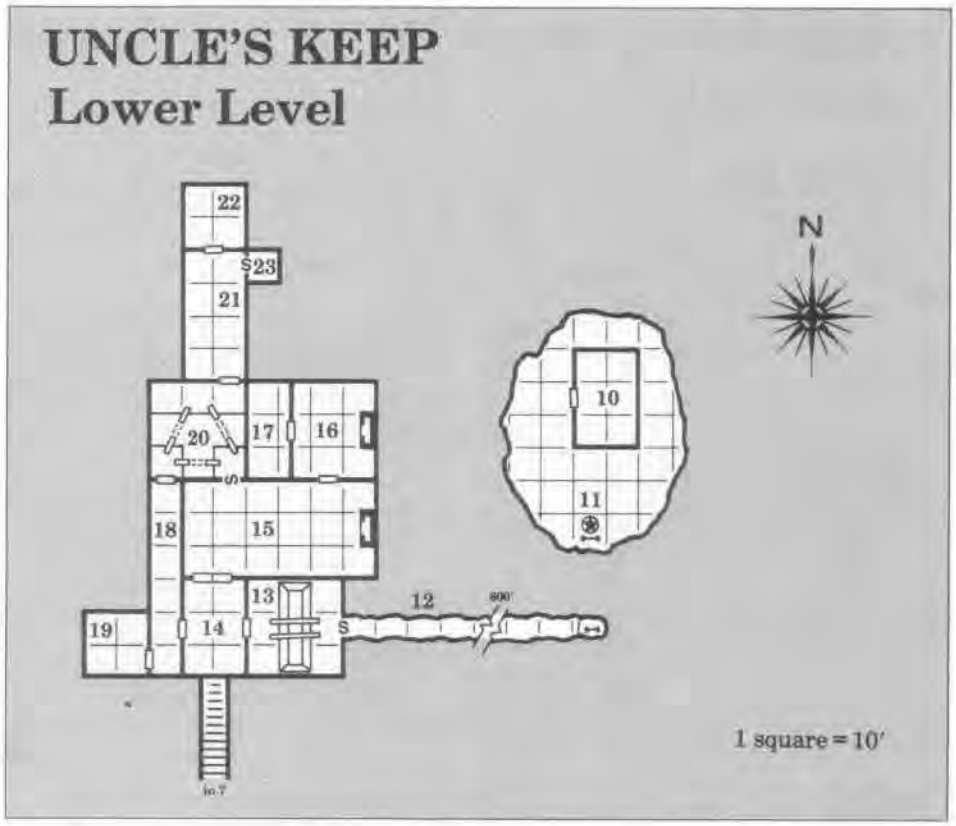
This hobgoblin is Backtalk. True to his name, he angered Sergeant Smut and was given the job of cleaning the dishes. He welcomes the opportunity to vent his frustration on the adventurers. He has no treasure.

Although Uncle was a recluse to the outside world, he did live in style, and he always remembered his servants' birthdays with parties in this room. The floor of the fireplace is covered with a thick layer of paper ashes. The door in the northeast corner is unlocked, and no noise can be heard from the other side. There is also a secret door in the northwest corner that leads to area 20.

16. Kitchen. This room contains the usual fixtures and implements. Like the dining room, it is a mess. Other than the hobgoblins' garbage and dirty pots and pans, there is nothing of interest in here. An observant character might see that there is a considerable amount of ash from paper in the fireplace, since the hobgoblins use books from the study (area 22) for kindling. There is an iron door in the west wall that is very cold to the touch.

17. Freezer. The temperature in here is below freezing. Hanging from hooks are the carcasses of various creatures. Uncle once befriended a wandering druid and persuaded him to cast a *control temperature* spell to bring this room below freezing. He then used a *permanency* spell from a scroll to create a permanent freezer to preserve foodstuffs.

18. Connecting Corridor. This long corridor is lit by torches in sconces. It has doors on the west, east, and north sides. A hobgoblin is sweeping up the hallway. When he sees the adventurers, he drops his broom, raises his hands, and cries out in Common, "Hey! I give up! Don't shoot! Don't hurt me! I surrender!"



This hobgoblin is Grinkle, the wimp of the hobgoblin troop. His father disowned him and, through connections with the chief, placed him in the troop "to make a real hobgoblin out of him" (Grinkle has always resented this). In any fight he will hang well back when the fighting gets fierce, for he has always believed that brains can accomplish more than brawn. Hence, when confronted by the PCs, he is not about to fight except in self-defense.

Grinkle's surrender is genuine. If he isn't treated roughly, he can tell the PCs about Lieutenant Julla in area 19 and that the two sergeants are snooping around farther north. He does not know about the trap in area 20 or what lies in areas 21 or 22, since these rooms were put off limits (except that there were a lot of books somewhere in that area that burned well in the dining room and kitchen). If promised an opportunity to join the party (and he will suggest this), Grinkle reveals the number of hobgoblins upstairs. Since the troop arrived at the keep, Grinkle has been waiting on Lieutenant Julla hand and foot and has been the butt of jokes from the other troopers. He therefore feels no loyalty to his fellow troopers.

The DM may allow Grinkle to stay with the party indefinitely as an NPC. If so, it should become apparent that Grinkle's talents are in thieving, sneaking, talking, and (surprisingly) cooking, but not in fighting. Despite these skills, no amount of effort short of magic can disguise him to look like anything but a hobgoblin. Grinkle can serve as an apprentice to a thief.

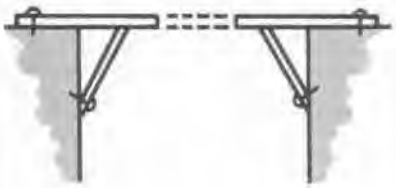
No noise is heard from the northern door. A successful listener at the western door hears a guttural humming. Neither door is locked.

19. Master Bedroom. This room is furnished with a large, comfortable bed, a chest of drawers, a chest, and an easy chair with hassock. The bed linens are dirty and stained, and dirty cups and dishes are scattered about. Standing before a mirror mounted on the south wall is a large hobgoblin holding a piece of cloth. The hobgoblin is staring at his reflection in admiration and humming contentedly.

This is Julla, the hobgoblin lieutenant in charge of the troop. A few hours ago

TRAP DIAGRAM

Area 20



he pulled off the cloth covering Uncle's enchanted mirror. This mirror causes the viewer to become enamored with himself unless a saving throw vs. spells is successful. Julla is tremendously vain, and he missed his save miserably. He stands totally oblivious to anyone coming into the room as he smoothes his eyebrows, adjusts his hair, and wipes crumbs off his lips. Uncle would leave the mirror uncovered whenever he was out of the room as a trap for would-be thieves.

Any attack will bring Julla out of his trance, and he will fight hard and to the death, bellowing for Grinkle's assistance (no luck there!). An initial back attack by the PCs will automatically succeed, as will any reasonable method used to slay Julla.

The lieutenant carries a pouch with 25 gp and two keys. One key opens the lock to the mausoleum (area 10). The other opens the chest in this room.

There is nothing of interest in or around the bed, chair, hassock, or chest of drawers. The mirror cannot be removed from the wall without breaking it (and if several adventurers are affected by the mirror, another PC may have to do just that!). The chest contains a broken silver lock, 400 sp and two gems (each worth 150 gp). The silver lock is from the mausoleum and worth 10 gp. At the DM's option, there may also be a letter, written in hobgoblin, from Julla's commander (a sub-chief), giving Julla orders and instructions. Such a letter might lead to interesting follow-up adventures.

20. Illusionary Trap Room. This is an oddly configured room as there is a T-shaped pit dividing it into three parts. The southwest and southeast corners are 10′ square; the northern section is 10′ × 20′. These three floor sections are connected by stout-looking boards bolted into the floor. Iron angle braces bolted into the sides of the pit and the bottom of the boards make the boards very stable. On the far north wall is a closed wooden door. Resting against the wall are two additional boards.

If an adventurer looks down into the pit, he can see that it is about 20′ deep. There is a brownish-red stain on the pit floor under the boards.

The middle 3′ of each board is a permanent illusion created by Uncle to prevent intruders from reaching his inner sanctum. The outer ends of the boards test just fine, but when someone reaches the middle, there is nothing but empty space and the pit below. The brownish-red stain on the floor is from the first hobgoblin who tried to cross over via the boards. After this accident, Lieutenant Julla put all areas north of this room off limits to the rest of the troop, as it is obvious that this trap must be guarding something valuable.

The two boards leaning against the wall on the other side of the pit are quite sturdy and were used by Smut and Cheff, the two hobgoblin sergeants searching in area 21. The door to area 21 is not locked. Successful listening at it can pick up muffled sounds of an argument.

21. Living Room.

> This ransacked room is lit by the torches held by two arguing hobgoblins in the northeast corner. The room's once-luxurious sofa, chair, and hassock have had their stuffing torn out. Pictures and tapestries have been ripped from the walls and thrown about.
>
> One hobgoblin is saying to the other (in hobgoblin) "I'm telling you, something's here, Smut!"
>
> The other replies, "And I'm telling you, there's nothing here."

The two hobgoblin sergeants, Smut and Cheff, are both ambitious and have figured that Lieutenant Julla put this part of the keep off limits so that he can find all the treasure (and get all the credit) himself. They are holding an involved discussion in which Cheff contends loudly that he has found something that looks like a secret compartment. Smut, on the other hand, is having second thoughts about disobeying orders and is anxious to get back before they are caught. Thus, if the PCs take reasonable precautions to enter quietly, they may hear further details of this argument and will surprise the two sergeants automatically. When the hobgoblins notice the adventurers, they throw down their torches, pull out their swords, and attack. The sergeants each have 5 gp. They fight to the death.

All of the furniture, tapestries, and other items in the room have been ruined in the search for Uncle's treasure. There is a secret door in the northeast corner (Cheff spotted it) that leads to area 23.

22. Study. This is another ransacked room, with ruined pictures and other items scattered about. There is also a desk that has been reduced to splinters. The built-in bookcases that line the room area empty; Uncle's library has been used to start fires in the kitchen and dining hall. A successful check for secret doors, however, reveals a small sliding wall panel. The recess behind the panel holds a scroll (containing the spells *wall of fog, magic missile,* and *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter,* all at 8th level) and a *wand of paralyzation* with six charges.

23. Treasure Room. This small room appears totally empty except for a pair of metal gauntlets in the middle of the room. There is also an *invisible* unlocked chest in the northeast corner. The chest is covered with contact poison that has weakened over time (save vs. poison at +4 or die, unless one is wearing the gloves or similar protection).

Continued on page 36

Continued from page 4

As a last comment (more like a query), I have always wondered how you review modules once they reach your desk. I assume you and/or your staff read them thoroughly, but is there more? Do you have groups around Lake Geneva playtest them? Is there a "crack team of players" who dutifully sits for days on end reviewing manuscripts? Or do you have a resident wizard who has the spells *detect quality* and *revise* always on hand?

Alan Grimes
Kansas City, Missouri

Some modules are playtested by their authors and others aren't. We use the combined gaming expertise of the staff to read through adventures for both readability and playability. If the author includes a strange game mechanic, we may spend a lunch hour playtesting part of an adventure to work out the kinks, but that's very rare. We simply don't have the time to run every adventure we publish, so we value your feedback. It is invaluable to other DMs who plan to run modules from DUNGEON Adventures.

Marvel Pros and Cons

I recently received issue #25 and was amazed to find a MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game inside! I think that's great! I was wondering if you were going to include Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle adventures in your magazine (if you get any).

I would also like to congratulate Paul May on his adventure, "The Standing Stones of Sundown." The vrock was a pretty powerful enemy.

If you print my letter, please print my full address.

Kai Hardy
57 Kuder
Akron, Ohio 44303

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I thought the day would never arrive that DUNGEON Magazine would start printing modules for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. Issue #25 proved me wrong.

For years I could only find Marvel adventures at my bookstore, and then only if I was lucky. My players (whose Marvel characters had not been used in months) were even more excited than I was. So we decided to try the adventure that very night, even though a meeting wasn't scheduled for almost a week.

We all loved it. One of my players told me that "Hellfire Hostages" was the best thing he'd ever seen in your magazine. Well, I don't actually agree with that, but I can say that I would definitely like to see more adventures for Marvel characters in DUNGEON Magazine.

I was, however, very disappointed to see that you've stooped to the level of using outside advertising. I was about to send you a letter of praise for avoiding it for so long. Then you gave in. Why? It's not as if you need the money or something. We subscribers pay for 63 pages of TSR role-playing games. Printing advertisements cheats us of this.

Also, do you have any specific formats for the writing of solo adventures? Your writers' guidelines give no clues about this.

Please thank John Blumen for me. His cover painting for issue #25 was awesome. And if you do print this letter, please include my full address. Thanks.

Chris Moulthrop
110 Cottonwood Lane
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania 15108

The inclusion of advertising in DUNGEON Adventures is a business decision, not an editorial one. We plan on bringing you at least the same number of pages of adventure as always. We've added pages to this issue to make room for the advertising, so that it doesn't take space away from the text.

Solo adventures can be written two ways. Adventures for one DM and one player should be written in our standard format, with sections for the DM, for the PC, etc. Solo adventures meant to be played by only one person generally are designed in the numbered-paragraph format (see issue #20, "White Fang"). Adventures in this format should be submitted with a flow chart so that we can follow the plot diversions graphically. If you can devise some other way to produce a solo adventure, send us a proposal. We're always willing to try something new.

I'd like to congratulate your fine efforts on a fantastic RPG magazine! The Marvel module in the September/October issue (#25) was great! Allen Varney did a superb job, and I would enjoy seeing Marvel modules more often in future issues.

Joshua Klos
Chicago, Illinois

I am thoroughly disgusted with you. Your publication of a MARVEL SUPER HEROES module is a waste of good magazine space. Not long ago, the readers were arguing about whether D&D® modules should be included in the magazine, and now you put in an entirely different gaming system! One module per issue isn't enough material to help a Marvel campaign anyway, so please don't publish another Marvel module. After all, the name of the magazine is DUNGEON, not HERO. Please print my address if for some reason you print this completely negative letter.

Oliver Homann
117 Ridgeland Rd.
Tallahassee, Florida 32312

I just received my copy of issue #25 and, upon seeing that it included something other than D&D and AD&D modules, was compelled to write to you. Last August I came across a copy of your magazine in a store and found the concept of several small, well-written modules in one issue of a bi-monthly magazine to be excellent. Upon finding that it also contained nothing other than D&D and AD&D game modules, and wouldn't print anything else, I became an instant subscriber. Since then, I have attempted to gain as many of your back issues as possible but became appalled that you were switching to AD&D 2nd Edition. Nevertheless, I still found your publication to be a great source of cheap, well-written modules.

When I found that you are now printing non-D&D and non-AD&D modules, I felt I had to write and tell you that I disagree. DUNGEON Magazine is purchased by people who play D&D and AD&D games and few play anything else. My players and I all have our budgets strained just trying to buy those few 1st Edition manuals we never got before. We don't, and probably never will, have enough money to convert to 2nd Edition. Now to find that some of my money is to be spent on games that neither I nor anyone else in my group plays or could afford to play is horrible. Your magazine is so good and so widely purchased

Continued on page 56

OPERATION: FIRE SALE

BY JOHN TERRA

Secrets: Get 'em while they're red hot.

Artwork by Jim Holloway

This is John's second adventure in DUNGEON® Magazine, and it has special significance for him. His free-lance debut was a pair of TOP SECRET® articles for DRAGON® Magazine, so in a sense he's come full circle. If he writes any more TOP SECRET/S.I.™ adventures, he promises to pick a locale that doesn't have big political changes occurring every other day. John's gaming group, the RPGA™ Network club known as "The Valiant Thirteenth Regiment," play-tested this adventure. They succeeded, though two PCs died and one was captured.

"Operation: Fire Sale" is a TOP SECRET/S.I. adventure for 4-8 agents. Though the adventure can be run using newly created agents, it is best suited for PCs who have gone on at least two previous missions. It is strongly recommended that the team contain PCs who have at least fourth-level skill in English, German, and/or Russian.

The Administrator should have a copy of TSAC1 *G4 File: Guns, Gadgets, and Getaway Gear,* which details the various guns and cars mentioned in this adventure. The TSAC5 *Commando* sourcebook gives additional information on some of the military skills and advantages that are not listed in the basic set.

The basic monetary unit of West Germany is the *deutsche mark,* or German mark (abbreviated DM). The exchange rate for marks to American dollars may be checked by the Administrator prior to running the adventure, but a value of $1 = DM 2 may be assumed instead.

Espionage Agencies

This adventure can be run using agents from a fictitious agency such as Orion, or agents from a real espionage agency. For those players who want a non-Orion fictitious agency, consider the following:

ICICLE (Intercontinental Commission on Investigations, Counterterrorism, and Law Enforcement) is an extremely secret organization based in Coventry, England. Founded by five wealthy, retired NATO spies, ICICLE is primarily a pro-Western organization, though the founders were wise and experienced enough to realize that sometimes even the good guys don't act in their own best interests. Therefore, ICICLE's main goal is to protect the West and Neutral nations in spite of themselves, and to make sure that the world isn't

blown up by the West, East, or some nonaligned power.

This often puts ICICLE at odds with Western as well as Communist agencies (AD&D® game fans should picture the Forgotten Realms' Harpers, but in the 20th century!). Though ICICLE is a world-wide network, it does not have an abundance of power or personnel in every nation. In fact, its resources are spread rather thin, and agents usually have little backup. This doesn't bother truly skilled agents, since many feel that the mere knowledge of having backup at their disposal makes them sloppy in their missions.

Very few people outside of ICICLE are aware of the group's existence. One or two high-placed officials in Scotland Yard, the FBI, Mossad, Interpol, and NATO have good relations with ICICLE. The KGB, GRU, CIA, and French Deuxième Bureau are aware that there is some free-lance spy agency intervening in the world and do not like it one bit.

Players' Briefing

It's a rainy Monday morning, the first day of October, in Coventry, England. Your team is gathered in your headquarters' briefing room awaiting your next mission. The wait is not a long one, for into the room strides your case officer, an attractive young American woman in her mid 20s. She carries a folder under one arm and clutches a steaming mug in her other hand. You know her only by her codename, "Cousin." Cousin flashes you all a tight, polite grin and sits down, opening the folder. Her whole bearing speaks of someone who is all business, and darn good at it.

"Good morning to you all. I hope that you're ready for something that requires finesse and guts. In fact, the more finesse you show, the less your guts will show, if you get my drift.

"Now, as you know, the advent of *glasnost* and *perestroika* has brought a considerable thaw in East-West relations. One result of this is the recently accomplished reunification of Germany.

"While the reunification is a good thing, it has resulted in a nation that, as far as defense secrets are concerned, leaks like a sieve. Though this situation will be rectified in time, the spy organizations of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Britain, France, and Germany are taking advantage of the chaos and going into a last-minute feeding frenzy, trying to scoop up as many secrets as possible before things clamp down. Everyone's actively picking up any tidbits that they can get their hands on, thus the codename of this mission is Operation: Fire Sale.

"One particularly disturbing dilemma is a steady flow of mid-level NATO and U.S. military secrets trickling into Soviet hands. This has been going on since before the reunification. The confusion of reunification hasn't helped the situation any.

"The German Army—the Bundeswehr—has informed us of the presence of one such leak in their midst, though they cannot pinpoint exactly where it is. The Bundesnachrichtendienst, or the BND for short—that's the West German Federal Intelligence Agency—has verified the complaint, saying that the leak has been going on for at least the past two months. Confidential sources trace the leak to the northwestern quarter of Germany, with Bremen as a likely candidate.

"The BND, acting on its own, has come to us for help. With the all-German elections slated for early December, the competency of the present West German government must not be compromised. The elections are supposed to determine the political future of Germany, which by implication includes united Germany's fate as far as NATO is concerned. A major spy scandal could result in Germany isolating itself from NATO, and at worst, leaning toward the Soviets. This cannot be allowed to happen.

"As it stands, the Soviet Union has already declared that it will not oppose a united Germany in NATO if that is what the German people want. The sight of a democratic West Germany tripping over itself with spy scandals may undermine public confidence as well as give the Soviet Union a good excuse to oppose Germany's NATO membership.

"After consulting with the West German president, the BND, and some confidential sources in the Bundeswehr, we have decided to send a group of non-Germans, outsiders who would not be recognized in the German intelligence community, to take care of the leak. This, people, is where you come in." Cousin pauses to take a sip of tea and review the contents of the folder. Your pictures spill out as Cousin makes a few notations on a piece of paper inside the folder.

"You will take a shuttle helicopter from Coventry to the RAF base at Leeds. Once there, you will catch a military flight aboard an RAF Nimrod Early Warning airplane to the Bundeswehr's NATO base at Bremen. It is a small, rear-echelon base that combines elements of air power and infantry. Report to Major Augustus Manneheim, base commander. You will be at his disposal. The major is the only person on the base who knows who you are and why you're coming. He is your temporary case officer, so work with him and do what he asks.

"You need not worry about smuggling intelligence equipment and armaments through customs, since you're traveling between NATO bases. Once you step outside the base into Bremen proper, however, you're in big trouble if the regular authorities catch you with any illegal equipment. This is a low-profile mission, with recommended minimal property damage or loss of life and limb. Take what you need, but be careful with it.

"Do not divulge your identity to anyone unless Manneheim tells you so. He knows you by your photographs and codenames, not by your real names or even by your usual working aliases.

"There is an ICICLE safe house in Bremen, but make contact only in a dire emergency. They use a bookstore as their front, and their phone number is 254009. Call them before trying to find the place.

"Despite the fact that 'only' mid-level secrets are leaking, this mission is important. Things in Europe are changing very fast, and we don't want to see Germany slip away from us. Mission Dispatch gives this mission a Yellow status: Urgent but low risk.

"Take care, and good luck. And of course, should you get caught, everyone will deny any knowledge of you or your mission. No back up, no prisoner exchanges."

With a final tight grin, Cousin gets up to leave. When she reaches the door, she turns to you. "Oh, I almost forgot. Your plane departs in 45 minutes. For those of you who don't have equipment, you'd better hustle down to Outfitting. But take it easy, will you? Travel light."

Outfitting

Each PC is cleared to check out one pistol, eight clips of ammunition, a silencer, a pen radio, and any necessary surveillance equipment. Fake IDs and passports are available.

Outfitting will not give PCs grenades or explosives. Requests for submachine guns, shotguns, or rifles are not automatically granted. The likelihood of getting such a weapon is a percentage equal to five times the PC's skill level in the requested weapon. Thus, an agent with submachine gun skill at level four has a 20% chance of getting one.

PCs may purchase equipment outright or sign for it. All equipment signed out must be returned in the same condition it left, or the PC pays 150% of the item cost.

Administrator's Briefing

Major Manneheim *is* the leak. He is being blackmailed by Major Igor Dzerzhinsky, a KGB operative. Dzerzhinsky is a rogue agent, and this operation has not been sanctioned by the Soviet premier.

It appears that Dzerzhinsky was put in charge of mid-level KGB espionage operations in the German area a decade ago. During that time he did his job well, using whatever methods were needed in order to accomplish his goals.

When *glasnost* rolled through Eastern Europe, the order came from on high to close down the operation, at least for the time being. Dzerzhinsky, feeling that *glasnost* and *perestroika* would not last, dismantled only some of his operations, keeping his most prized "leaks" in place. Igor believed that even if the Cold War never resumed, he could make some use of any information gathered.

A year ago, Dzerzhinsky's foresight paid off when his agents obtained highly confidential information about the West German government. The documents described certain industrialists who were bribing government officials to slow down the reunification process in order to give West German corporations time to make a profit from the process, or at least to get a head start against corporations that had not paid bribes.

Other documents dealt with political dirty tricks that had been committed against minor West German political parties, or that would be used in the future to assure the ruling party's position in the new Germany.

It did not matter that these documents compromised only a few of the politicians in power. If word ever got out, it would undermine popular confidence in the current government. This lack of confidence would certainly affect the all-German elections slated to be held in the first week of December. The resulting backlash could put a Communist government in the new united Germany and even keep Germany out of NATO, perhaps bringing the country closer to the Soviet Union.

Therefore, Dzerzhinsky decided to put the information to good use. Using his espionage network, he researched the backgrounds of dozens of top-ranked West German military officers. Dzerzhinsky dug deep and found a perfect target, Major Augustus Manneheim, a loyal West German officer who is strongly devoted to Germany. Unfortunately, Manneheim's family helped to financially support the Nazis in 1936, and a few of Manneheim's relatives were members of the Nazi party. Manneheim's career would be ruined if these facts came to light.

Dzerzhinsky used Manneheim's fear of seeing his beloved Germany become Communist, as well as the German major's family secrets, to force Manneheim to send him mid-level classified information on a regular basis. Manneheim realized that leaking such nonessential information was the lesser of two evils. After all, what was worse? A few American and British secrets turned over to the Russians, or a united Germany that was non-NATO and Communist to boot? The secrets stolen thus far include blueprints and performance data for fighter aircraft, designs for air-to-air missiles, and specifications for tanks.

The following prominent Germans figure in the scandal. An asterisk after an entry means that the person in question knows about the existence of Major Dzerzhinsky's list.

—Major Augustus Manneheim, Bundeswehr*
—Heinrich Gundberg, President of KMW Motorwerks*
—Albert Kiel, Ministry of Defense official
—Friedrich Ganz, BND official
—Colonel Johann Lofgren, Bundeswehr
—Admiral Albert Von Spee, Kreigsmarine (German Navy)
—Otto Prussian, Senior official in majority party
—Manfred Brandt, One of West Germany's top spies*

When NATO superiors noticed the leak, Major Manneheim put on quite a convincing act, feigning outrage and concern and demanding that something be done soon. The major thought that typical Ministry of Defense red tape would delay such an investigation for a long time.

The major outsmarted himself, however. His act was so good that NATO became alarmed at the leak and launched an immediate plan to rectify the matter. Thus, the major now finds himself the unwilling case officer for a group of outside agents (the PCs). What's worse, he has to act just as gung ho to these outsiders as he did to his superiors when he complained about the leaks.

Major Manneheim will attempt to frame Lt. Johann Deitrich as the leak. Deitrich is the major's trusted aide, though the young man has no idea what is going on. Should the ruse fail, Manneheim will enlist the aid of the Exterminators, a world-wide assassination service, to remove the PCs.

Time Line

Some events will occur regardless of the PCs' actions. The following time line will aid the Administrator in placing the action chronologically. Some events may not happen if the PCs interfere significantly.

Monday, October 1st

7:00 A.M.: Manneheim arrives early at the NATO base and plants the stolen plans in a secret compartment in Deitrich's desk.

10:00 A.M.: The PCs touch down at the NATO base in Bremen and attend a briefing by Manneheim (see "Touchdown in Bremen").

11:00 A.M.: The briefing ends.

11:30 A.M.: Manneheim leaves the base and goes to the Two Lions restaurant after disguising himself.

11:45 A.M.: Deitrich leaves the base for lunch and goes to the Two Lions. Manneheim arrives at the Two Lions, drops off the plans in the men's room, and leaves to get some lunch elsewhere.

12:00 Noon: Deitrich arrives at the Two Lions, orders lunch, and uses the men's room. Martin, the courier, arrives at the Two Lions for lunch.

12:15 P.M.: Martin uses the men's room and retrieves the package that Manneheim has hidden.

1:00 P.M.: Martin leaves the Two Lions and drives to Hamburg. Deitrich returns to the base.

2:00 P.M.: Manneheim meets with the PCs for their progress report.

4:00 P.M.: Martin exchanges briefcases with Rolf, the courier. Three KGB agents watch Rolf.

4:15 P.M.: Martin heads back to Bremen. Rolf catches the train to Berlin. Manneheim leaves the base for home. Deitrich goes to his own quarters on base.

4:45 P.M.: Rolf's train arrives in Lúbeck. The first three KGB agents disembark, and the second KGB team gets on.

5:00 P.M.: Manneheim arrives home. Deitrich leaves the base by cab and goes to the Wursthaus, a Bremen restaurant, to meet his fiancee, Joanna.

5:30 P.M.: Deitrich arrives at the Wursthaus and dines with Joanna. Major Manneheim has dinner at home.

7:00 P.M.: Rolf arrives in Berlin, drops off the briefcase in a station locker, then takes a cab to the Hotel Republik. A second KGB agent team watches the lockers from the lounge and awaits the pick-up. Martin arrives at home (area G). Deitrich and Joanna walk to the cinema.

7:30 P.M.: Rolf arrives at the Hotel Republik. A female KGB agent retrieves the briefcase from the locker using a spare key, then drives to Soviet embassy. The second KGB team follows her in a separate car.

8:00 P.M.: Both KGB cars arrive at the Soviet embassy. Industrialist Heinrich Gundberg leaves his office and drives to Manneheim's house.

9:45 P.M.: Deitrich and Joanna take a cab from the cinema to Joanna's apartment. Gundberg arrives at Manneheim's, gets information on the PCs, then goes back home.

10:00 P.M.: Joanna is dropped off at her place. Deitrich retains the cab and heads back to his base quarters. Manneheim goes to sleep.

10:30 P.M.: Deitrich arrives at his quarters and goes to bed. Gundberg arrives home.

Tuesday, October 2nd

7:00 A.M.: Manneheim leaves home for the base. Gundberg leaves for his office.

7:30 A.M.: Deitrich reports for duty. Gundberg arrives at his office.

8:00 A.M.: Manneheim arrives at the base. Martin arrives at work at the KMW factory and calls Gundberg (his boss) to confirm the drop's success. Gundberg instructs Martin to keep a low profile.

9:00 A.M.: Gundberg calls Manneheim to tell him that the drop went well.

11:45 A.M.: Manneheim and Deitrich eat together in the mess hall.

12:00 Noon: Gundberg goes to the Bierhaus for lunch, meets Exterminator Marina Sanderson, and gives her the PCs' photos and DM 150,000.

12:15 P.M.: Marina leaves the Bierhaus and goes to the Hotel Preussen.

12:30 P.M.: Marina arrives at the Hotel Preussen.

1:00 P.M.: Everyone is back at work.

2:00 P.M.: The PCs have their daily briefing with Manneheim.

3:00 P.M.: The briefing ends. After the PCs leave, Manneheim calls Gundberg and arranges to meet him for dinner. If the PCs told Manneheim that they suspect Gundberg or that they think Deitrich has been set up, Manneheim tells Gundberg to give the assassins the go-ahead to kill the PCs. If this happens, Gundberg calls Marina and gives the go-ahead.

4:00 P.M.: Manneheim leaves for home. Deitrich leaves the base by cab and meets Joanna at the Two Lions. Gundberg leaves for Manneheim's house.

4:15 P.M.: Deitrich meets Joanna at the Two Lions.

5:00 P.M.: Gundberg and Manneheim arrive at Manneheim's house simultaneously. Martin leaves the KMW factory for home. If Gundberg gave the go-ahead, Marina and Olaf leave the Hotel Pruessen and head to the Von Tirpitz Hotel, where the PCs are staying.

5:15 P.M.: Marina and Olaf stake out the Von Tirpitz Hotel. Assassinations will be attempted between now and midnight.

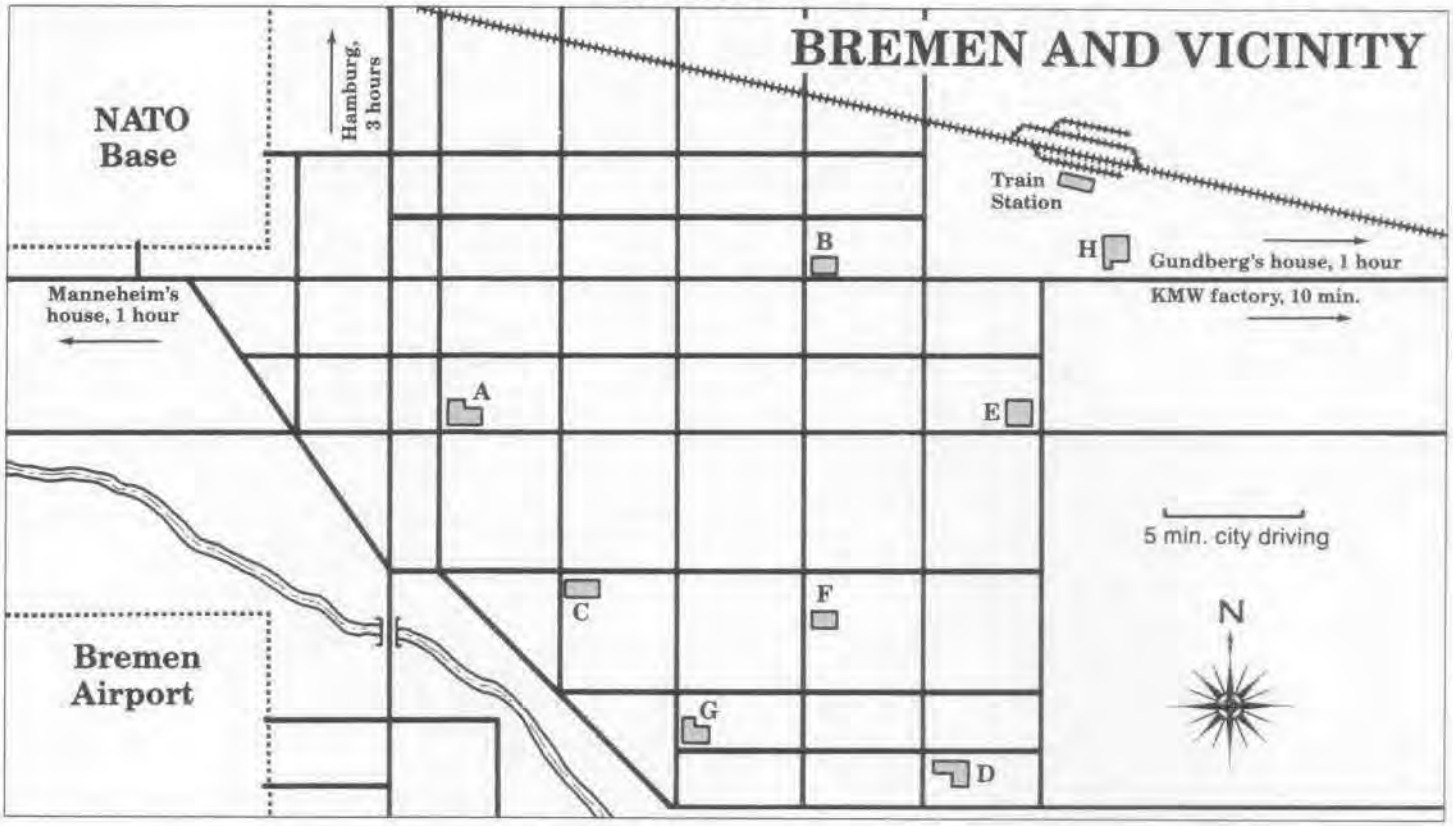
6:00 P.M.: Deitrich and Joanna take a cab to her apartment. Martin arrives home and eats supper.

6:15 P.M.: Deitrich and Joanna return to her apartment to work on wedding plans and address invitations.

9:30 P.M.: Gundberg leaves for home. Deitrich leaves by cab for the base.

9:50 P.M.: Deitrich arrives at the base and turns in. Manneheim goes to sleep.

10:30 P.M.: Gundberg arrives at home and prepares for bed. Martin falls asleep.



Touchdown in Bremen

The following information should be read or paraphrased to the players:

Your military flight goes well and, before you know it, your team touches down at Bremen Air Force Base. The presence of tanks and jets together indicates that the base is jointly run by the West German Army and Air Force.

As soon as the plane comes to a halt, a sergeant escorts you to the base headquarters. The weather is chilly, and a cold drizzle is falling. Once inside the building, the sergeant leads you through an entry area, then passes through an outer office that contains a young lieutenant hard at work, and finally into the office of Major Augustus Manneheim.

The gray-haired major smiles at you and offers seats to the group. He taps his intercom and barks, "Deitrich, some refreshments for my visitors . . . schnell!" After he gets a crisp acknowledgement, the major sits down, grins again, and interlocks his fingers on the desk top as he addresses you.

"Guten Morgen. I am Major Augustus Manneheim, commander of this army-air base. Apparently, I am now your—how do you say?—case officer. Very well. Let us begin.

"First of all, accommodations have been arranged for you at the Von Tirpitz Hotel. Each room sleeps two.

"Second, we have taken the liberty of renting two Audi 5000S autos so that you may get around town easily. They are parked outside this building. Here are the keys.

"Finally, I expect a full report every day at two o'clock in the afternoon sharp! You will report to me, and only to me, in person. This means all of you. There is much at stake here, and I will not tolerate any laziness, and . . . ah, here is Deitrich!"

Manneheim's speech is interrupted by the young lieutenant who was sitting in the outer office. The man smiles shyly as he brings in a large tray with coffee and apple strudel. He turns smartly and walks back outside.

"That was my aide, Deitrich. A nice young man, though he does not say much. He is to be wed in a few months, so I suppose the plans and the financial matters are weighing on his mind."

The major takes a cup of coffee and shakes some brown powder into it. The air smells of cinnamon. After taking a sip and savoring it, he continues. "Now, where was I? Ah, yes. Laziness. I do not tolerate it. I want aggressive seeking of clues and suspects.

"During the daylight hours, you may move freely about the base courtesy of these special passes. At night . . . well, all I can say is that terrorists enjoy infiltrating military bases, and our sentries are trained to shoot first. You know the routine, eh?

"Perhaps I can help you get started in your investigations? I received an anonymous telephone tip stating that we should look for a man named Martin who wears a green scarf and eats lunch at the Two Lions pub. Make what you will of that. Now, are there any questions before I send you on your way?"

According to Manneheim, the tip came in yesterday. If any PCs ask about Deitrich, the major says that the young man has worked for him for about two years and has proven reliable, though he has an annoying tendency to eat lunch off base. This bothers Manneheim because he likes to have Deitrich within shouting range in case something needs doing right away.

If there are no more questions, Manneheim drops some heavy hints that the PCs should leave and perhaps check into their rooms.

Actually, Manneheim is in bad straits. He is slated to make a drop-off today, and there is no way to change the time. After the PCs leave, Manneheim makes preparations to leave the base at 11:30 A.M. and drive into Bremen. Before he gets into the city, he pulls off the road into a wooded area and disguises himself in a brown wig with graying sideburns, gray moustache, and horn-rimmed glasses. A well-worn gray trench coat rounds out the ensemble.

His disguise complete, Manneheim drives to the Two Lions and drops off the latest set of plans (drawings and specifications for the AMRAAM air-to-air missile) in the men's bathroom. The plans are wrapped in brown paper and hidden in the wastebasket. This done, the major heads off to the Wursthaus (area C), a competing restaurant, for lunch.

The Von Tirpitz Hotel
(Area A)

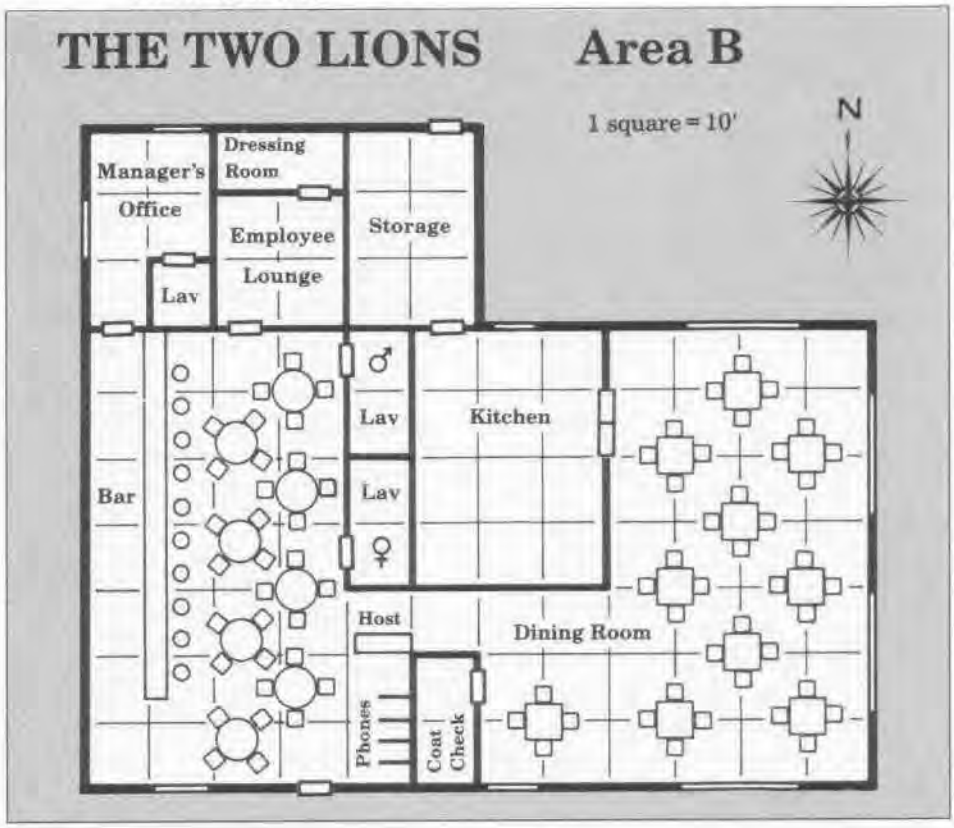
The PCs have a block of rooms, each sleeping two. The hotel is of upper-middle class quality and features an underground parking garage. The rooms are not bugged.

The Two Lions
(Area B)

The Two Lions (*Zwei Luven*) is a modest little pub and restaurant located in Bremen. The busiest times are from 11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M., and from 5:00 P.M. to midnight.

When the PCs first enter the restaurant, they are met by the host or hostess on duty, who directs them to the right if they desire food, or to the left for the bar area if only drinks are desired.

The bar area has subdued lighting and provides a cozy ambiance. The bar itself has 10 stools. Many small tables, each with four chairs, are crammed



in tight rows in the rest of the room. Entry to the bathrooms is through the bar area. The major, whether disguised or not, sometimes sits at a bar table for a few minutes to enjoy a cup of coffee with cinnamon. As a rule, the major's duties bring him into Bremen three times a week in the late morning. When disguised, he comes in once every two weeks.

The east section of the building contains the dining area and kitchen. Though a little brighter than the bar area, the restaurant is cozy and tastefully decorated with antique beer steins, coats of arms, old swords, and the like. Dinner and lunch are served here during the previously mentioned hours.

If the PCs pick up on Manneheim's tip and go to the Two Lions looking for Martin, the man with the green scarf, they will see him as well as Lieutenant Deitrich enter the pub at noon (though they do not walk in together). Deitrich uses the bathroom after he gets his table in the restaurant section. Martin also sits in this section. Five minutes after Deitrich leaves the men's room, Martin enters the bathroom and gets the package, tucking it inside his raincoat's inner pocket (he later transfers the package to the briefcase he has left in his car).

After lunch, Martin gets into his car and drives off to Hamburg while the oblivious Deitrich goes back to the base. The two men give no hint of knowing each other, which makes sense, since they don't!

If any waiters or waitresses who work the 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. shift are asked for information, and at least DM 20 is paid out, the PCs will eventually find a server named Greta, a very attractive and observant young woman in her early 20s. Greta mentions that Lt. Deitrich comes to the restaurant up to three times a week. As for the man in the green scarf, he comes in about twice a month.

If any of the PCs prompt Greta for more details, she says that she always knows when the man with the green scarf will come in, because before he does, an older man with thick glasses who is always bundled up in a raincoat comes in and orders a cup of coffee and a spice shaker of cinnamon. The man orders nothing more, nothing less. Greta thinks that the man is perhaps

Major Augustus Manneheim

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
40	62	48	67	73	51	55

Sex: Male Race: White
Nationality: German Born: 1946

Advantages: Acute Hearing, Ambidexterity, Musical Ability, Toughness, Command

Disadvantages: Deep Sleeper, Ego Signature (drinks coffee with cinnamon), Short-winded, Vision Impairment (2) (glasses)

Skills: Basic Firearms, Rifle (5), Submachine Gun (4), Pistol (5), Hand Grenade (2), Basic Heavy Weapons, Basic Melee, Boxing (4), Cryptography (2), Interrogation (4), Stealth (3), Surveillance (3), Acting (4), Driving/Automobile (5), First Aid (2), Musical Instrument (3), Radio Operator (3), Area Knowledge (Northwest Germany) (5), German (5), English (5), Russian (3)

Equipment: 9-mm Mauser Parabellum automatic pistol

Car: Maroon Audi 5000S

Major Augustus Manneheim stands a little shy of 6' tall. His close-cropped hair is gray, as are his eyes. The major is a spit-and-polish military man whose uniforms have such sharp creases that you could cut tomatoes on them.

Manneheim serves in the West German Army as the commander of a rear-echelon NATO base in Bremen. He is a loyal German and views the leaking of some mid-level secrets as a small price to pay for the security of his homeland from collapse into Communism and Soviet influence. Manneheim is wracked with guilt about his role in this affair, but he has rationalized that he has no choice.

The major is fond of playing the piano and drinking coffee laced with cinnamon.

Lieutenant Johann Deitrich

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
56	64	76	66	52	60	70

Sex: Male Race: White
Nationality: German Born: 1963

Advantages: Attractive Appearance (1), Fearlessness, Stamina

Disadvantages: Night Blindness

Skills: Basic Firearms, Pistol (4), Rifle (3), Submachine Gun (2), Grenade Launcher (3), Basic Heavy Weapons, Basic Melee, Boxing (4), Oriental Martial Arts (5), Concealment (3), Stealth (3), Radar (4), Photography (3), Piloting/1-engine (3), Swimming (4), Area Knowledge (Bremen) (4), Basic Liberal Arts, History/PoliSci (5), German (5), English (3), Russian (3), Polish (3), French (2)

Equipment: 9-mm Walther P-38 automatic pistol

Johann is a nice young man, 6' tall, with steel blue eyes, square jaw, and blond crewcut. He is a dedicated officer in the Bundeswehr and serves as Major Manneheim's aide, a job he takes very seriously. In fact, Johann respects the major tremendously and is fiercely loyal to him. Johann is a German patriot.

Johann is quite naive and is oblivious to his superior's antics. He is head over heels in love with his fiancee, Joanna. They plan to be married in five months.

Martin Gneiseneau

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
38	42	22	40	32	40	32

Skills: Basic Melee, Knife (2), Driving/Automobile (4), German (5)

Equipment: Hunting knife

Car: Powder-blue 1969 Volkswagen

Martin is 5'9", average build, in his 40s, with thinning brown hair and muddy brown eyes. He loves wearing a long green scarf.

Martin is a foreman at KMW Motorwerks and has been given the task of courier by his top boss, Heinrich Gundberg. Martin does not know that he is carrying military secrets, but he has a sneaking feeling that whatever he is carrying is illegal. The large amount of money that Gundberg pays him more than compensates for any guilt on Martin's part.

Rolf Weisbaden

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
28	52	38	30	51	40	45

Skills: Basic Firearms, Basic Melee, German (5), Russian (4)

Rolf is a cut-out (a non-agent hired to do an espionage-related task) often used by the KGB for European courier missions. He is a man in his 30s with a slight frame, mousy brown hair, and horn-rimmed glasses. Rolf is not a hero; he just does this for the money.

If Rolf is searched, the PCs find a key with the number 42 printed on it. This key opens a locker in the Berlin train station. Rolf does not know who picks up the briefcase; he is supposed to bring the case to the locker, then go to the Hotel Republik, where his bosses have reserved him a room for one week. His fee is DM 20,000.

KGB Agents
Anatoly, Boris, Cara, Dmitri, Edward, Frederik, Georgina

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
70	60	80	70	75	65	70

Skills: Basic Firearms, Pistol (4), Submachine Gun (3), Basic Melee, Oriental Martial Arts (4), Boxing (3), Concealment (3), Cryptography (4), Disguise (3), Interrogation (5), Lockpicking (2), Shadowing (3), Stealth (2), Surveillance (4), Driving/Automobile (4), Driving/Motorcycle (3), First Aid (2), Photography (3), Radio Operator (2), Scuba Diving (2), Social Chameleon (3), Swimming (2), Throwing (4), Basic Science, Russian (5), German (5), English (3), Polish (2)

Equipment: Silenced 9-mm Stetchkin pistols, pen radios, lockpick sets

Car: Black 1970 four-door sedans of Soviet manufacture. The KGB keeps two AK-47s, 100 rounds of ammunition, a first-aid kit, and other supplies in the trunk. (These cars are available only in Berlin.)

These agents include two teams of three agents that protect Rolf at different points on his journey, and one female KGB agent who picks up the briefcase in the Berlin train station. These agents are specially trained for such missions in this part of Europe.

If anyone intercepts the courier or tries to take the briefcase, the KGB agents move in swiftly. If the PCs are in a public place, the KGB agents act like local law-enforcement officials and whisk the PCs to a waiting car or secluded spot. Once their privacy has been secured, the KGB agents eliminate the nuisance.

These agents are hard-line Soviets who dislike *glasnost* and follow Major Dzerzhinsky. They take orders only from him.

an obsessive lunatic, someone who has a routine that he follows fanatically. Greta wants to be a writer, so she is always speculating about what her customers are really like.

En Route

From the restaurant, Martin drives his little Volkswagen onto the Autobahn, making his way to Hamburg. The trip takes three hours. During the ride, Martin places the plans in a bullet-proof, combination-locked briefcase (Difficulty 50).

Martin drives to the Hamburg train station and parks his car. He enters the station and goes to the platform that faces Track 12, where a train bound for Berlin will soon leave.

When Martin reaches the platform, he sits next to a raincoat-clad man reading *Der Spiegel*. The stranger has a briefcase that looks exactly like Martin's. The briefcases are on the floor, side by side. When the train arrives at the platform, both men get up, each taking the other's case. The newspaper reader, a cut-out named Rolf Weisbaden (see sidebar), boards the train. Martin takes Rolf's empty case, goes back to his car, and heads back to Bremen.

Three KGB agents, wandering the train station, also board the train. They have been assigned to act as Rolf's unseen escorts, running interference for Rolf against possible enemies (the PCs leap to mind). The agents will spend the entire trip in the observation car, appropriately enough. The KGB team is made up of two men and a woman.

The train consists of an engine, five passenger cars, a dining car, and an observation car (in that order). The passenger cars are made up of individual nonreserved compartments, each compartment holding four people.

If the PCs try to sit in Rolf's compartment, he politely expresses his desire to be left alone, suggesting that the PCs find another compartment. Persistent PCs will make Rolf nervous, causing the man to leave the compartment and walk into the observation car. This is a signal to the KGB agents that something is wrong, since Rolf has orders never to leave his railway car.

If the PCs tail Rolf into the observation car, Rolf makes a little hand gesture as each PC comes into the car. This shows the KGB who to deal with. PCs using Observation on Rolf make their checks at half their INT scores.

Half an hour after the train leaves Hamburg, it reaches the city of Lübeck on the West German side of the West-East border. Though the two Germanies have one currency, and travel restrictions have been lifted, there are still two separate governments until the December elections. As a result, there is still a customs post here, though it is a mere formality, and passing through customs is ridiculously simple.

The three KGB agents have spent lots of time in West Germany, and they stand a chance of being identified by West German authorities. Therefore, they get off at Lübeck. Any PCs who take no measures to conceal firearms or surveillance devices stand a 30% chance of being discovered, arrested, and detained for at least 48 hours, during which time they will be extensively interrogated.

A second KGB team boards the train, taking the same positions as the first team. These three men have already cleared customs. Rolf has the same arrangement with them.

The train eventually pulls into Berlin, stopping at what was once East Berlin's main railroad station at 7:00 P.M. Rolf detrains, walks to the coin-operated baggage lockers, and places the briefcase in locker 42. He then hails a cab and departs for the Hotel Republik, where he will stay for one week. The second KGB team also leaves the train.

The lockers are watched from a distance by the three KGB men. Under their gaze, a female KGB agent with a duplicate key opens the locker and takes the briefcase, driving away in a black four-door sedan with diplomatic plates. The male agents follow her at a safe distance (six car lengths) in a similar car. Both vehicles drive to the Soviet embassy and are admitted to the compound. The plans are handed off to a KGB captain who is loyal to Major Dzerzhinsky. At this point, the AMRAAM plans are beyond recovery.

Should the PCs attempt to get the plans out of the locker, the KGB agents move in to deal swiftly with the interlopers, out of sight of any bystanders.

If the PCs have followed the route all the way to the Soviet embassy in (East) Berlin and now wish to go back to Bremen, the next train leaves at 9:00 P.M., arriving in Hamburg at midnight. The train goes on to Bremen, arriving there at 1:00 A.M..

Investigating the Base

True to Manneheim's word, the PCs have unlimited access to all of the base facilities. However, there is nothing here of any consequence except for the headquarters building that houses the major's office.

All of the windows and interior doors have locks (Difficulty 40) and circuit alarms (Difficulty 20). The front door has a stout lock (Difficulty 70) and a very good circuit alarm (Difficulty 50).

1. Entry Area. This room has nice carpeting, several sofas for visitors' comfort, and a counter. A gate in the counter allows access farther into the office. As a rule, there are four Generic Soldiers (see *Administrators Guide*, page 23) here on daytime duty, and two soldiers at night. Each is armed with a 9-mm Walther P-38 automatic pistol and a nightstick.

Behind the counter are a small desk, intercom system, typewriter, telephone, and alarm button. There is nothing of interest in the desk. The alarm button alerts personnel in Communications and Security, who respond in five seconds.

2. Deitrich's Office. A large desk is placed against the west wall. Three chairs against the north wall are for visitors waiting to see the major. The door from the reception area is locked at night. The door in the north wall leads to a private bathroom shared by Deitrich and the major.

Atop the desk are a typewriter, blotter, intercom, phone, digital clock, and desk lamp. The only non-Army-issue item on the desk is a photograph of a stunning young woman with long blond hair. Written in German are the words "To my dearest Johann. All my love—Joanna."

The desk is locked (Difficulty 45), denying casual access to the two sets of three drawers and the middle drawer. The drawers contain papers pertaining to the routine operation of the base. The middle drawer holds two appointment books, one for the major and one for Deitrich. Johann's book is filled with mushy references to scheduled dates with Joanna. Also tucked in the book are several invoices for various wedding expenses, furniture, etc. It appears that the couple are planning an average-size wedding, nothing too extravagant.

BREMEN NATO BASE HEADQUARTERS

N

1 square = 10'

Each PC who gives the desk a thorough going-over must make an Observation Check. Any who pass the check see a tiny corner of white paper stuck under the desk's middle drawer. This is a clue to the secret compartment under the drawer. A letter opener, pen knife, or other thin, sharp metal object will be needed to pry off the panel that covers the secret recess.

The recess contains a (phony) Swiss bank book with a balance equal to DM 2,000,000 (DM 100,000 deposits are listed every two weeks for the last five months), a matchbook for the Two Lions pub, a photocopy of schematics for the F-18 Hornet, and a short typed letter that reads:

> Johann:
> From now on, make copies of desired plans rather than taking them outright. NATO is getting suspicious.
> I.D.

Major Manneheim planted this evidence in Deitrich's desk. Deitrich is not even aware that his desk has a secret compartment! Manneheim forged the letter, using the typewriter in his own office. A PC who wishes to compare the print with various typewriters on the base must make an INT Check at −20 in order to accurately ascertain which machine produced the letter.

Johann and Joanna are in love, loyal to each other and to Germany, and have no involvement whatsoever in this case. Deitrich is being duped by the very man he admires most in the world. As a result, Deitrich will refuse to believe that Manneheim is guilty of any wrongdoing, thus the PCs will have great difficulty ensuring the lieutenant's cooperation.

Johann's base quarters holds no incriminating evidence, nor does Joanna's apartment (area E). Johann does not even have a Swiss bank account.

3. Major Manneheim's Office. This room is a nicely furnished and carpeted office with a huge old desk. A sofa and two chairs are provided for guests. A locked filing cabinet (Difficulty 25) stands in the northwest corner. The door from Lieutenant Deitrich's office is always locked at night. A second door in the east wall leads to a private bathroom.

Atop the desk are a blotter, telephone, desk lamp, intercom, and typewriter (the machine that Manneheim used to forge the note found in Deitrich's desk). The desk's lock has a Difficulty Rating of 50, though there are no incriminating documents in any of the drawers (the major is too smart for that). The middle drawer holds a letter from the BND, dated last week, that tells Manneheim a group of agents is slated to arrive at the beginning of the month to investigate the security leaks. The letter is accompanied by the PCs' photos and codenames.

The only other thing of interest is the major's phone list. The home and work telephone numbers of industrialist Heinrich Gundberg (one of the names on the blackmail list mentioned earlier) are listed in the book.

The filing cabinet contains personnel records of everyone on the base, including the major. The records all appear to be in order and list home addresses where applicable.

4. Communications and Security. This door is never locked. The room is always manned by four Generic Soldiers and contains radar screens, radio equipment, and alarm monitors for the headquarters. There are two phones and one intercom on one of the control panels. If an alarm sounds, three of the soldiers respond, and they have orders to shoot first. Besides the usual pistols, these particular soldiers have M-16 assault rifles and walkie-talkies.

5. Arsenal. The door is always locked (Difficulty 75). The arsenal holds 50 5.56-mm M-16 assault rifles, 50 9-mm Walther P-38 pistols, and 200 rounds for each weapon.

6. Cryptography. The base uses this room for intercepting and decoding non-NATO radio messages. Two Generic Soldiers are always here on duty, attending the computers and radio monitors. The door is always locked.

7. Personnel. The room is manned only during the day by five Generic Soldiers. It contains five desks and a whole wall full of locked filing cabinets (Difficulty 20). The base uses this room as the administration and personnel office to track manpower and materials, and it is consequently a resounding bore for investigating PCs. The door is locked at night.

8. U.S. Attache. The door is locked at night. This spartan office belongs to Captain Tyler "Red" Huring, U.S. Air Force representative for the base. Captain Huring is a tall, slim man in his early 30s, with red hair, freckles, and a prominent Texas drawl.

Captain Huring's desk is locked (Difficulty 20) and contains nothing unusual except for a half-written letter addressed to his wife, Stella. The letter tells how Huring feels about Manneheim, Deitrich, and Germany in general. Huring considers the major a "stuffy old gasbag," and Deitrich a "dumb, naive sucker who is always broke." Germany, in his opinion, is boring, and he hates soccer. Apparently, Huring is not enjoying his stay.

Huring lives in the officers' quarters on the base and is innocent of any wrongdoing. His only offense is his bad attitude.

Other Locations

The Safe House
(Area H)

Hidden in the cellar of a Marxist bookstore is a 10-room safe house belonging to the PCs' organization. The facility is run by Wilhelm, a young agent. PCs can reach the safe house only after they have called the telephone number and gotten directions.

The safe house contains food, medicine, fresh clothes, spare pen radios, passport-forging equipment, and 20 silenced 9-mm Walther P-38 pistols, each with 32 rounds of ammunition.

As a last desperate resort, Wilhelm can also lend the PCs a run-down truck that he uses for the bookstore. Wilhelm will never accompany the PCs on missions.

Truck: Max Spd 50, Accel 5, Handl −30, Brake 20, Prot −40, #Pass 8, Range 200.

Manneheim's House

The major lives in a very comfortable manor house that has been in his family for generations. He lives alone and does his own cooking, hiring someone to do a thorough housecleaning every two weeks.

Manneheim has a gun collection in a display case. The collection includes a 9-mm Luger pistol, a .22 Galil semiautomatic rifle, a 9-mm Schmeisser MP-40 submachine gun, and an AK-47 assault rifle. Each gun has 100 rounds of ammunition stored in a separate drawer in the lower section of the display case.

If Manneheim is confronted with proof of his deceptions (Interrogation skill need not be used), the Administrator must make a WIL check for the major. Should the major fail his check, he coolly says the following:

> "Yes, I stole the secrets and passed them on. But don't you see? I had to do it! I am being blackmailed by someone in the KGB, someone who has access to certain secrets that, if revealed to the German public, could sway the all-German elections in December to an unfavorable conclusion. The new united Germany could very well fall into the Soviet sphere of influence. Of course, NATO membership for the new Germany would be an impossibility if that happened!
>
> "I had to opt for the lesser of two evils. What's a few mid-level American secrets when compared to the future of my Fatherland?
>
> "Still, I am glad the truth is out. I have come to hate myself and what I have done. You must believe me, if there was another way out, I would have taken it.
>
> "When word came that you people were arriving to investigate the leak, I realized that I had to cover myself. Deitrich, the naive fool, was such an easy target—so trusting. Of course, he had no idea what was going on."

If, when confronted by the PCs and their evidence, the major rolled a 95-99 on his WIL check, he failed in a big way. All of the pressure, anger, sadness, and shame of what he has done comes to a head. His speech is the same but is laced with many expressions of grief including crying, wringing his hands, and banging his head against the wall.

If Manneheim made his initial WIL check, he denies any involvement and tries to reach his guns in order to get the drop on the PCs. He may do this by making a pretense of having to tend to something in the house.

If, after Manneheim's confession, the PCs ask who is blackmailing him, they must use Interrogation skill. If the PCs make their check, then Manneheim must make another check, this one at half his WIL score. If he fails, the major tells the PCs that Major Igor Dzerzhinsky, stationed at the Soviet Embassy in Berlin (the section formerly known as East Berlin), is behind the operation. Dzerzhinsky, the major believes, is part of an anti-Gorbachev faction that wishes to bring back heavy Soviet influence to Eastern Europe. He even speculates that the KGB major is acting outside his authority.

If Manneheim is asked to divulge the entire scheme, another Interrogation check must be made. If the PCs make the check, another half-WIL check should be made for the major. If Manneheim fails his check, he reveals the smuggling route, the conspirators, everything.

Manneheim is sure that the blackmail information is stored at the Soviet Embassy in Berlin. There is a major East-West friendship reception to be held at the embassy on October 9th. Perhaps the PCs could come up with some way of getting in?

Heinrich Gundberg's House

Gundberg lives in an opulent mansion in suburban Bremen. He has a maid, a cook, and four handymen-bodyguards (function as Generic Soldiers). Each is armed with a .45 M-1914 automatic pistol and a nightstick. The entire staff lives on the grounds. Gundberg himself has a 12-gauge shotgun, but if he is faced with more than one gun-wielding PC, he will back down.

If Gundberg's guards are neutralized and the man is confronted with his part in the crime, he claims to have no knowledge of what the PCs are talking about. Thus, an Interrogation check must be made by the PCs. If the check is successful, Heinrich immediately crumples into a snivelling heap and says:

> "I confess! I hired the Exterminators to kill you! They have been so useful to me in the past to get rid of competition, and surely you know how tough it is to be manufacturing automobiles now? If it isn't automobile commercials that don't show the car, it's commercials with some man telling outrageous lies. Let's not even mention the Japanese! And what about this Fahrvergnügen nonsense? I just can't take it anymore!
>
> "The KGB got wind of my past, ah, business practices and threatened to go public with my name as well as the names of government officials who had things to hide. I am a major supporter of the current coalition,

Heinrich Gundberg

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
30	60	30	40	33	45	45

Sex: Male Race: White
Nationality: German Born: 1940

Advantages: Mechanical Aptitude, Photographic Memory, Wealth (3)

Disadvantages: Cowardice, Greed, Lechery, Overweight (1), Short-winded

Skills: Basic Firearms, Pistol (2), Shotgun (2), Driving/Automobile (5), Sailing (3), Social Chameleon (2), Basic Liberal Arts, Business/Economics (5), Basic Science, German (5), English (2)

Equipment: 9-mm Walther PP automatic pistol

Car: Silver KMW 87b "Stuka," a horrible knock-off of the BMW M5. It has the same performance stats as the BMW, but if the KMW ever exceeds 80 MPH, it has a cumulative 5% chance of breaking down per 15 minutes of 80+ MPH speed. Check the Vehicle Crash Table, page 86 of the Players' Guide. Slowing down to below 80 MPH, then speeding back up to over 80 MPH "resets" the car, and the determination begins again at 5%.

A bald man with brown eyes, Heinrich is 5'6" tall and weighs 200 lbs. He smokes Cuban cigars and dresses expensively.

Heinrich is the president of Kubelwagen Motorwerks, the company that produces the KMW, a flawed newcomer to the auto market. He is a ruthless weasel of a man who cherishes money above all else. Heinrich does not care how he gets this money, which is what got him in trouble in the first place: the Soviets picked up information that Heinrich used the Exterminators to wipe out a competitor in the automotive market.

In regard to this whole espionage affair, Heinrich is rapidly losing what little nerve he has. He wants the Exterminators in place very quickly in order to wipe out any snooping PCs. In fact, he has already commissioned the Exterminators to kill Major Dzerzhinsky in the event of Heinrich's or Manneheim's capture.

and if it fell, so would I.

"I did what I had to do. What any good businessman would do. I cut my losses and helped Manneheim smuggle the secrets out. One of my factory foremen, a man named Martin, proved to be reliable and his silence easily bought. I will testify, anything! Just don't beat me up!"

The only thing that Gundberg will not confess to is a fail-safe measure that he himself has instituted, without Manneheim's knowledge. If Gundberg or Manneheim are implicated in the leak, the Exterminators have standing orders to kill Major Dzerzhinsky at the diplomatic reception in Berlin on October 9th. The only way that the PCs could possibly find this out is if they use truth serum on Gundberg and ask him if he has any other contracts in the works with the Exterminators.

A search of Gundberg's house, a process that takes two hours, reveals evidence of extensive unaccountable financial transactions, a ledger listing all of the secrets sold to the Soviets, and a list of all the blackmailed men (see "Administrator's Briefing"). As a bonus, there is a phone number that enables Gundberg to contact the Exterminators. This could be a major break in the effort to penetrate of this mysterious assassin-for-hire organization.

The Exterminators

Swedish nationals Marina Sanderson and Olaf Erikson are two top Exterminators who have dealt with Heinrich Gundberg in the past. When Manneheim told Gundberg about the PCs' upcoming investigation (and after Gundberg regained his composure), the industrialist thought it prudent to have the two hired killers "on station" in case their services were needed.

On Tuesday, Marina meets Gundberg for lunch at the Bierhaus (area F) and receives the PCs' photos, descriptions, and hotel location, as well as the usual fee. Marina goes back to her hotel room to wait for the signal to proceed.

The two assassins are staying at the Hotel Preussen (area D) under the names Marja and Bjorn Larsen. One of the duo is in the room at all times awaiting Gundberg's call.

Gundberg makes the call if Manneheim gives the go-ahead, and the major will do so if he finds out, through the PCs' daily reports, that they either suspect Gundberg or are convinced that Deitrich was framed.

The Exterminators' tactics are simple. They leave the Hotel Pruessen in their rented car and drive to the PCs' hotel to stake out the place. The assassins try to eliminate any PCs that leave the hotel in small groups. Marina enjoys killing people in deserted locales, so if she and Olaf see the entire team move out, they follow in hopes of catching their targets on a lonely stretch of road, or even on the Autobahn.

Should these tactics fail, the killers take the direct approach. After midnight, Marina and Olaf sneak into the PCs' rooms and attempt to kill them in their sleep, concentrating on one room at a time.

Since Marina and Olaf are high-powered assassins and worthy foes, The Administrator should play them very intelligently. The killers are hoping to live to see another day, even if this means retreating; they are not suicidal. Consider each killer to have five Luck Points.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs should be able to crack this case if they think clearly and role-play well. There are two basic ways to wrap up the adventure.

First, the easy one. If the PCs report back to their superiors with their findings, the major confesses his role in the affair and turns over temporary command to Lieutenant Deitrich. The PCs are put on a flight back to England, where they can make a full report.

Once the PCs' superiors have been briefed, higher-ups talk to the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Secretary, who in turn talk with their Soviet counterparts, dropping heavy hints about the fate of economic aid to the Soviet Union being tied to the fate of the sensitive information. The Soviets exert the proper amount of authority and stop the rebellious KGB faction. Major Dzerzhinsky escapes capture, goes underground, and plots a horrible and painful revenge on the PCs.

The second option is tougher. After informing their superiors, the PCs are sent to Berlin to recover the blackmail information during the party at the Russian embassy. The PCs will have to dress up in tuxedos and evening gowns,

and make witty conversation with diplomats, all the while looking for a way to get to the embassy's upstairs offices where the information is secured.

Major Dzerzhinsky is at the party, as are media representatives from all over the world. Major politicians from the U.S.A., Soviet Union, and Europe are also in attendance. Finally, Marina and Olaf attend the party (if they are still alive) in order to kill Major Dzerzhinsky. The Administrator will have to design the embassy and the reception's schedule and guest list.

If the PCs failed Operation: Fire Sale, the repercussions depend on how badly they performed. If the PCs were caught by the KGB and taken prisoner or shot in the streets, a huge diplomatic disaster occurs. Germany is in bad shape as popular opinion turns against NATO, whom the Soviets accuse of sending the agents. Germany's tipping into the Soviet sphere of influence is inevitable.

If the failure was more low-key, such as not cracking the mystery of the leak, the PCs are recalled to their headquarters and given a healthy dose of verbal abuse. Their next mission will be to act as security for the British Foreign Secretary when he attends the diplomatic reception at the Russian embassy in Berlin on October 9th, giving the PCs a second chance to redeem themselves.

The Exterminators

Marina Sanderson

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
66	82	90	74	82	74	86

Sex: Female — Race: White
Nationality: Swedish — Born: 1962

Advantages: Ambidexterity, Attractive Appearance (3), Eye-Hand Coordination, Fearlessness, Light Sleeper, Sensuality, Stamina (1), Toughness (2), Wealth (2)

Disadvantages: Allergies (cats) (3), Ego Signature, Enemy (PCs' organization) (4), Greed, Lechery, Unmistakable Feature

Skills: Electronics (4), Computer Technician (4), Crossbow (2), Knife Throwing (3), Basic Firearms, Pistol (5), Rifle (5), Sniper Rifle (5), Submachine Gun (3), Shotgun (2), Basic Heavy Weapons, Basic Melee, Knife (4), Fencing (3), Boxing (4), Oriental Martial Arts (5), Concealment (4), Demolitions (4), Disguise (2), Forgery (3), Interrogation (4), Lockpicking (5), Pickpocket (3), Shadowing (5), Stealth (3), Surveillance (4), Tracking (1), Acting (3), Climbing (3), Driving/All vehicle types except Tank (4), Fine Arts (4), First Aid (3), Lip Reading (3), Parachuting (2), Photography (2), Piloting/1-engine/Multi-engine/Helicopter (2), Radio Operator (3), Sailing (3), Skiing (4), Sleight of Hand (3), Social Chameleon (4), Swimming (4), Throwing (4), Basic Liberal Arts, Anthro/Psych/Soc (4), Basic Science, Chemistry (5), Swedish (5), English (4), German (3), Russian (3), French (2)

Equipment: 9-mm M-40 automatic pistol, 7.92-mm Type D Browning Sniper Rifle with nightscope, knife, 2 oz. plastique in face-powder compact, timer-detonator disguised as watch, garrote in belt, pen radio, lockpick set. Both guns have silencers.

Car: Rented tan Audi 5000S that she shares with Olaf. Marina and Olaf keep their big guns and other supplies in the trunk.

Standing 6'1" tall, with long blonde hair and very pale blue eyes, Marina Sanderson is quite a striking woman. She is one of the Exterminators' most deadly agents and is called in on very delicate or difficult assassinations.

Marina hates cats with a passion and leaves a calling card at each of her jobs showing a cat silhouette inside a red circle with a diagonal slash. She lives the typical, decadent jet-set style of life and supports this lifestyle by doing pricey work for the Exterminators.

Clearly, Marina stands no chance of winning any awards for her personality. She is a cold, heartless killer who uses people and disposes of them once they are of no further use to her. Olaf is her trusted partner who shares many of the same interests that she enjoys.

Olaf Erikson

STR	INT	REF	WIL	CON	MOV	DEX
90	50	50	60	90	70	50

Sex: Male — Race: White
Nationality: Swedish — Born: 1963

Advantages: Athletic Ability (2), Attractive Appearance (2), Fearlessness, Mechanical Aptitude, Sensuality, Stamina (2), Toughness (4), Wealth (2)

Disadvantages: Clumsiness, Deep Sleeper, Enemy (PCs' organization) (4), Gambling, Greed, Lechery, Traumatic Flashbacks (flying tennis balls) (4)

Skills: Basic Mechanic, Aircraft Mechanic (3), Electronics (3), Computer Technician (4), Basic Firearms, Pistol (4), Sniper Rifle (5), Submachine Gun (3), Shotgun (2), Basic Melee, Knife (3), Boxing (4), Wrestling (5), Concealment (4), Demolitions (3), Interrogation (3), Shadowing (4), Stealth (1), Surveillance (3), Climbing (3), Driving/Automobile/Truck/Motorcycle/Boat/Snowmobile (3), Horsemanship (4), Piloting/1-engine (4), Scuba Diving (3), Skiing (5), Social Chameleon (4), Swimming (4), Throwing (5), Basic Science, Engineer/Civ/Elec/Mech (3), Swedish (5), English (5)

Equipment: 9-mm M-40 automatic pistol, 7.62-mm Type D Browning sniper rifle with night scope, knife, pen radio, lockpick set. Both guns have silencers.

Marina's partner Olaf is 6'3" tall, with wavy blond hair, tanned complexion, and blue eyes. He is an extremely muscular man. Marina uses Olaf as brute force, though he does have subtle assassination skills.

Olaf was once a tennis pro, but his career came to an abrupt end when a high-velocity tennis ball struck him on the left temple, causing him to careen headlong into the spectator stands. He suffered severe head trauma resulting in a slowing-down of his reflexes and a bitterness toward anything related to tennis.

Olaf's association with Marina makes him as high a priority as Marina on the PC organization's most wanted list. He has no sense of humor and is quite an arrogant boor. Olaf drinks too much for his own good and exhibits an almost bizarre fondness for Finnish vodka. His secret desire is to meet West German tennis stars and beat them up. Ω

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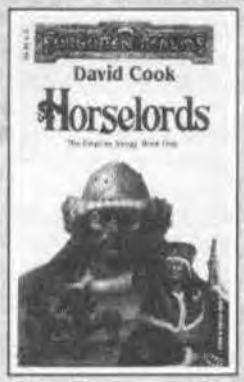

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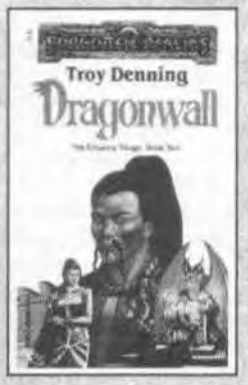

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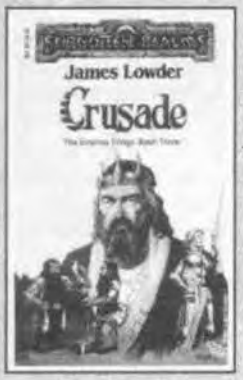

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CARAVAN GUARDS

BY STEPHEN J. SMITH

The heroes get to kick some bhut.

Artwork by Ronald Wilbur

This is Stephen's third DUNGEON® adventure. He has also written "The Bane of Elfswood" (issue #21) and "Hrothgar's Resting Place" (issue #25). After wracking our collective brains for a catchier title for this module ("No Bhuts About It," "Bhut Wait—There's More!" etc.), we decided to leave well enough alone (except for the teaser line).

"Caravan Guards" is a D&D® Expert Set adventure designed for 6-8 player characters of levels 6-8 (about 50 total levels). A variety of character classes, including at least one magic-user or elf, will be useful.

For the Dungeon Master

This short adventure can be run while the PCs are returning home from another quest or are traveling to a distant place. The scenario described in this module should take place along a merchant trail through a dark and dangerous forest. If the DM's campaign is set in the Known World of the D&D *Expert Rulebook* and Gazetteer series, a good setting for this adventure is the Darokin Road, in the great forest between the cities of Darokin and Selenica.

As the PCs ride along the trail, they overtake a small merchant caravan traveling in the same direction. The PCs are greeted in a friendly but wary manner by the merchant leader, who introduces himself as Sir Bryan Derban. Derban then tries to hire the adventurers to help guard his wagons, explaining that he is carrying a mysterious item that his evil half-brother, Malcolm, would dearly love to get his hands on. Malcolm, Sir Bryan continues, has obtained the services of an accomplished wizard and a small force of ogres. This evil alliance has already claimed the lives of several of Bryan's caravan guards. The merchant leader offers a tidy sum of gold to hire the PCs as replacements.

If the PCs accept Sir Bryan's offer, they get to know Bryan's other guards better and are soon called upon to defend the wagons from two threats: a hungry chimera and a band of bugbears.

Then, during their first night of guard duty, the PCs get a big surprise: Sir Bryan and his seven original caravan guards turn into wild-eyed, savage maneaters. The adventurers must fight for their lives to avoid becoming their employer's dinner.

Meet the Bhuts

Sir Bryan and his retinue are bhuts, unusual humanoid monsters similar in many ways to lycanthropes and undead. During the day, bhuts look and act like normal humans. But with the setting of the sun, their skin becomes scaly, their hands become claws, their hair grows wild, and they transform into toothy, savage man-eaters.

Like undead monsters, bhuts are immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells (as well as all poisons and gases), and they make no noise while moving. Bhuts are not undead, however, and cannot be Turned by clerics. They can be hit by only magical weapons and spells, and a single hit from a *blessed* weapon will slay a bhut instantly.

In combat, bhuts attack with their two claws and chilling bite. Anyone bitten by a bhut must make a Saving Throw vs. Paralysis or be numbed for 1-4 rounds. Numbed creatures always lose initiative in battle and suffer a −2 penalty to all to-hit rolls.

Bhuts radiate a potent aura that makes them immune to the effects of *detect evil* and *know alignment* spells. In fact, all *know alignment* attempts are distorted by this aura, and the bhuts register as Lawful. These scheming creatures often live near human settlements to obtain their meals. To avoid arousing suspicion, bhuts usually assume some innocent guise such as monks, gypsies, or even traveling merchants.

All the bhuts in this adventure have the following common statistics:

Bhut: HD 7 +2**; #AT 2 claws/1 bite (in bhut form); Save F10; ML 10; AL C; CC/33.

Other statistics are variable and accompany the description of each member of the caravan. These "NPC" descriptions list the bhuts' monster statistics as well as the statistics for their human forms [in brackets]. The bhuts fight as 7th-level fighters during the day, with the exception of Sir Bryan, who attacks as a 7th-level magic-user. Even while the bhuts are in human form, they still cannot be harmed by nonmagical weapons or attacks.

When these creatures assume their normal (monster) forms, they attack as 7-HD monsters using their claws and teeth. The only exceptions are "Ogre," who always attacks with his beloved two-handed sword, and Sir Bryan, who casts suitable spells before engaging the PCs tooth and nail. Upon completing their transformations, the bhuts' armor classes drop to 4 (even lower for those with Dexterity bonuses and Sir Bryan with his *ring of protection +1),* as their skin grows scaly and tough. The bhuts should retain the bonuses and penalties from their human ability scores when in monster form.

Sir Bryan Derban: AC 3 [8]; hp 33; MV 120′ (40′); #AT 2 claws/1 bite [1 weapon or spell]; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6 plus special [by spell or weapon type]; S 10, I 16, W 11, D 12, C 16, Ch 13; spells: *light, magic missile* (×2), *detect invisible, ESP, dispel magic, hold person, polymorph other;* dagger

Sir Bryan is the leader of the bhuts, and he acts as the leader of the merchant caravan in this adventure. He is of average build and is quite handsome and charming, having black hair and a moustache, friendly blue eyes, and a reassuring voice. In keeping with his cover as a merchant, he tends to wear colorful, expensive clothes.

Though he is also a 7th-level magic-user, Sir Bryan hides his abilities until the bhuts attack the PCs. Sir Bryan loses the memory of any uncast spells once he changes into bhut form, so he must rememorize spells every morning. His spell book is hidden in a secret compartment in his wagon. In addition to his memorized spells, Sir Bryan's spell book contains the following spells: *read languages, read magic, ventriloquism, knock, wizard lock, water breathing, wall of fire.* He also owns two magical items that he wears on his person. An *amulet vs. crystal balls and ESP* hangs from his neck at all times, and he wears a *ring of protection +1* on his right index finger.

Eric Tramble: AC 4 [7] hp 36; MV 120′ (40′); #AT 2 claws/1 bite [1 weapon]; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6 plus special [by weapon type]; S 12, I 13, W 13, D 10, C 10, Ch 11; leather armor; sword.

Eric is second-in-command to Sir Bryan, and he acts as Bryan's close friend and trusted advisor. He is slightly shorter than Bryan and has short, curly brown hair. His quiet personality does not mean that he is shy.

Gord Crestkill: AC 3 [4]; hp 47; MV 90′ (30′); #AT 2 claws/1 bite [1 weapon]; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-6 plus special [by weapon type]; S 14, I 10, W 8, D 13, C 13, Ch 11; chain mail armor, *sword +1.*

Becton Crestkill: AC 4 [5]; hp 48; MV 90′(30′); #AT 2 claws/1 bite [1 weapon]; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-6 plus special [by weapon type]; S 13, I 11, W 13, D 10, C 15, Ch 11; chain mail armor, *sword +1.*

Gord and Becton both appear to be capable fighters in their early twenties, and they claim to be brothers (Becton seems to be the older). Both have brown hair (though Gord's is lighter) and are quiet but civil toward the PCs. The brothers share an interest in weapons and armor, and will gladly compare or discuss arms with any PC fighters.

Sir Rickinson DeNorland: AC 4 [5]; hp 40; MV 90′ (30′); #AT [1 weapon]; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-6 plus special [by weapon type]; S 13, I 9, W 9, D 12, C 13, Ch 15; chain mail armor, sword.

This blonde-haired, blue-eyed fighter is a ladies' man through and through. He is always courteous to women and will slavishly cater to the desires of a lady he finds particularly beautiful. Because of his constant pursuit of members of the opposite sex (and because he tends to devour his lady-friends when he meets them in bhut form), the other caravan members have nicknamed him "Wolf."

Lornal Westhill: AC 4 [5]; hp 41; MV 90′ (30′); #AT [1 weapon]; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-6 plus special [by weapon type]; S 13, I 12, W 12, D 10, C 14, Ch 6; chain mail armor, sword.

Lornal is a bitter individual who never has anything good to say about anyone else. For the most part he ignores the PCs, but he may make a nasty, sarcastic comment if someone makes a mistake in combat.

Petri: AC 1 [2]; hp 34; MV 90′ (30′); #AT [1 weapon]; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6 plus special [by weapon type]; S 11, I 11, W 10, D 18, C 10, Ch 12; chain mail armor, sword, three throwing daggers, short bow, 12 arrows.

Petri is the clown of the group. He is short (5′4″) and has a wild tuft of brown hair atop his head. Petri is always smiling or talking, and as a result he sometimes gets on the nerves of his fellow travelers (Lornal in particular). Quick, energetic, and dexterous, Petri is an accomplished juggler and has also been known to play an occasional practical joke. Petri is the caravan's lone archer, but he is deadly accurate with his short bow.

"Ogre": AC 4 [5]; hp 55; MV 90′ (30′); #AT 1 weapon; Dmg by weapon type; S 18, I 3, W 7, D 9, C 16, Ch 6; *two-handed sword +1,* chain mail.

Ogre is a giant of a man (6'10", 320 lbs.), as his name implies. He is also not too bright and has trouble speaking clearly, with the exception of a few words ("kill," "break," "smash," and "dinner"). Ogre is neither gentle nor refined. He can be quite destructive with his magical *two-handed sword +1*, which he uses even in bhut form.

The Bhuts' Caravan

Sir Bryan's caravan has traveled throughout the Known World for years, seldom remaining in one area for more than a week or two. Typically, the bhuts ride into a town posing as merchants, grab a quick bite to eat, and then quietly slip away. They also obtain quite a few meals consisting of the fellow travelers they meet on the road.

Occasionally, the bhuts set up an extended operation in a larger city. During these operations (most of which are contrived by Sir Bryan), the bhuts present themselves as gypsies, pilgrims, a troupe of entertainers, or traveling scholars (Ogre doesn't do very well at this one). The cocky bhuts seem to dare the local authorities to uncover their gruesome misdeeds. Only once were the bhuts tracked down, and they dined on sheriff that night.

The caravan itself consists of two medium-size roofed wagons, each of which is drawn by four sturdy draft horses, and six war horses that the caravan guards ride. Under normal conditions, Eric and another bhut (usually Sir Bryan or Petri) drive the wagons while the remaining six bhuts serve as mounted guards.

The two wagons serve different purposes. One carries the merchant bhuts' trade goods, currently 40 bulky bundles of common animal pelts and hides and four bundles of precious furs (fox and giant weasel). Each bundle of common furs has a value of 15 gp and an encumbrance of 400 cn. Each parcel of precious furs is worth 500 gp and has an encumbrance of 500 cn. This wagon also contains four two-man tents and a dozen warm blankets. At night, the bhuts who are not on guard duty sleep in the back of this wagon.

The second wagon is Sir Bryan's private property, and the PCs will not be allowed inside. It contains two comfortable down mattresses (one for Bryan and one for his assistant, Eric); two large chests (securely bolted to the wagon floor); a large sack containing Eric's spare clothes; a crate of iron rations (enough dried beef to feed eight persons or bhuts for four weeks); a barrel of drinking water; and a variety of other common items. The two chests contain Sir Bryan's expensive wardrobe (2,500 gp value) and the bhuts' disguises: clerical robes and holy symbols, clown outfits, gypsy clothing, and the like. These disguises have a value of 750 gp, but finding the proper buyers for these outfits should prove to be a formidable challenge for the PCs.

There is a secret compartment in the floor of the wagon beneath Sir Bryan's mattress (treat as a secret door). Hidden therein is the bhuts' treasure: a large sack containing 27 sp, 315 ep, and 89 pp; a second sack with 585 gp; a small bag that holds four 500-gp pearls; and Sir Bryan's spell book (see his character description for a list of the spells in this book).

Sir Bryan's wagon contains something else of note. Hanging from the ceiling are two large metal birdcages, and perched inside one is a colorful bird. If presented to the right buyer, this rare bird could fetch a price of 100 gp. However, this bird is actually a *polymorphed* captive of the bhuts (see the "Concluding the Adventure" for the identity of this prisoner).

When the bhuts attack a group of victims and there are too many to eat in one sitting, Sir Bryan uses his *polymorph other* spell to turn one of their opponents into a turtle or some other harmless, slow-moving creature. The captive is then placed in a birdcage until the following morning, when Bryan casts a second *polymorph* spell on the victim, turning him into a bird, which the bhuts keep well fed until they're hungry again. At this time Sir Bryan casts a *dispel magic* spell, and the bhuts enjoy their supper. Prisoners who resist the second *polymorph* spell into a bird are kept in a cage until nightfall. Sir Bryan then dispels the *polymorph* spell and the other bhuts dig in.

For the Player Characters

Having seen no one along the trail for quite some time, you almost feel a sense of relief when you spy a small merchant caravan traveling in the same direction as yourselves on the road ahead. As your group draws nearer, you see that the caravan consists of two roofed wagons, each of which is drawn by four draft horses. Six men on horseback, most of whom wear metal armor, encircle the wagons.

When the men spot you, they halt the wagons and begin trotting back down the road, either to greet or to intercept you. The guards stop about 10 yards away, their hands resting on the hilts of their swords. One is a black-haired man with a neatly trimmed moustache, wearing a flowing blue shirt that waves like a flag in the wind, clean brown pants and a pair of shiny black boots; he appears to be the leader. He edges his charger forward a bit, his hand raised before him in greeting.

"Hello, my friends!" he calls out in a pleasant tone. "I am Sir Bryan Derban, owner and leader of this caravan. Who might you be, and where might you be headed?"

Derban chats with the PCs in a friendly manner, trying to learn where they are headed. He then informs the group that his caravan is also traveling in that same direction, though probably to a different destination (depending on where the DM decides to run this adventure in his own game world). Sir Bryan's objective in this encounter is to convince the adventurers to stay with his caravan, even if only for the night.

At first, Derban simply asks the PCs if they would like to travel with his caravan, stating that he and his men could use some companionship on this lonely trail. If this straightforward method fails, Sir Bryan makes the following plea to the PCs. Should the PCs still not wish to travel with the caravan, there will be no adventure.

Sir Bryan's Plea

A troubled look clouds up Sir Bryan's handsome face. He sighs aloud, shaking his head, and then announces, "My friends, I have not been entirely truthful with you, and for this I am most sorry. I would have endangered your lives—and under the guise of friendship! I am afraid that my recent problems have affected my judgment.

"You see, although your companionship would be a pleasure

during our travels, that was not the only reason I asked you to join us. You look like accomplished fighters, something that I can sorely use at this time. Perhaps you would be interested in staying on with us for a while if I paid you? Well, first let me tell you my story.

"In my wagon I am carrying something—a family heirloom—that my half-brother Malcolm decided ought to belong to him. Malcolm hired the services of an evil wizard and a small army of ogres. For the past two weeks he has been pursuing my caravan. I have lost several guards to the ogres and the spells of the wizard, but fortunately my elite guard corp" —he smiles and gestures at his surrounding men— "is still intact."

Sir Bryan pauses momentarily, as if weighing his words carefully. At last he says, "I am not accustomed to hiring strangers as mercenaries, but these are strange times and I feel I can trust you. And," he adds with a weak smile, "I'm afraid I may not reach my destination without assistance. Would you be interested in selling your services to me?"

Derban offers the PCs 1,000 gp each if they agree to accompany him all the way to his destination (whatever lie he told the adventurers earlier) or 500 gp each if they travel only part of the way with the caravan. Since Sir Bryan knows he won't be paying the PCs anyway (one way or the other, the alliance between the caravan members and the PCs will end that night!), he can be haggled into offering the PCs an additional 500 gp for their services. This is the limit, however, for the bhuts don't want to tangle with a bunch of adventurers who can be hired only for an astronomical amount of gold; such a group's fighting skills might prove worthy of the price they ask!

Sir Bryan says nothing more about the mysterious "heirloom" that he is carrying (there is no heirloom; it's simply a part of Sir Bryan's false story), and under no condition will he allow the PCs inside his wagon. If the adventurers seem suspicious of Sir Bryan's story or his secret cargo, the merchant leader shrugs and says that he cannot reveal the object or its hiding place until Malcolm is defeated and the PCs prove themselves worthy of his trust.

Events Minor and Major

The DM should run the following events in the order presented. Some of these events require combat, while others simply serve to further introduce the other caravan guards to the PCs.

The Injured Guard

Shortly after hiring the PCs, Sir Bryan asks if anyone in the party is a healer (cleric). He explains that during the last attack on the caravan, an ogre managed to stab one of his guards (Becton) in the foot, nearly severing his little toe. He would appreciate it greatly if the cleric could heal Becton (any *cure light wounds* spell will suffice). Although Becton can still ride with the other guards, his wound prevents him from being quick and steady on his feet. If healed, Becton thanks the cleric with a 250-gp onyx, saying, "I would like to donate this to your merciful order, Holy One." The PC cleric then has a friend

for life (or at least until nightfall!).

In truth, Becton received his wound from one of the bhuts' recent victims. Ironically, he now wields the magical sword that injured him.

The Wolf Stalks His Prey

Shortly after Sir Bryan hires the adventurers, Sir Rickinson "the Wolf" DeNorland begins romancing the female PC with the highest Charisma score. He begins with the introduction, "Sir Rickinson at your service, my lady," and constantly hounds his admired PC with more such chivalrous nonsense. By mid-afternoon he will be so forward as to say (pick one), "The way you use that wand with such grace/ The way you daintily wield your crushing mace/The way you finger that dagger of yours/In your bulky metal armor/ . . . You really look good!"

Should the object of Sir Rickinson's desires not return his affection, the chivalrous guard will direct his loving attention to another female PC (if one is present). Sir Rickinson doesn't give up; the DM should make sure that Sir Rickinson picks out a particular female PC to be the object of his affection during the adventure (whether she wants to be or not!). If there are no females in the PC party, Sir Rickinson will sulk throughout the adventure.

Chimera Attack!

Rays of midday sun filter through the treetops as the caravan crawls slowly along the trail. The guard named Petri pulls three apples from a small sack and begins to juggle the fruit on horseback. In the middle of his act, Petri tosses one of the apples to Gord, who catches it with a smile and lobs it back. Petri takes Gord's return toss smoothly and keeps right on juggling. He proceeds to flip an apple to Becton, Rickinson, and a randomly determined PC, always catching the return throw in perfect synch with his juggling.

With a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, Petri turns his glance toward Lornal, the dark-spirited guard, and says, "Come on Lornal, join the fun!"

Lornal raises one arm, motioning for Petri to throw him an apple. Upon receiving Petri's toss, however, he chuckles meanly and promptly rolls the piece of fruit in front of his mount. As his horse halts to sniff the offering, a horrible screech fills everyone's ears as a monstrous three-headed form swoops down through the branches overhead and attacks!

The swooping three-headed monster is a chimera. It attacks a randomly determined PC the first round of combat and anyone within range of its three heads in subsequent rounds. Although bhuts are normally immune to nonmagical attacks, the chimera's dragon-head attacks (bite and breath) are strong enough to cause them damage (they don't yet know this, believing that they are immune to its bite). The bhuts avoid frontal assaults in hopes that the PCs will finish the monster off, which also avoids the clumsy problem of having a bhut be attacked but not be wounded.

Chimera: AC 4; HD 9**; hp 56; MV 120' (40'), flying 180' (60'); #AT 2 claws/ 3 heads plus breath; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-8/ 1-10/3-12 plus 3-18; Save F9; ML 9; AL C; ER/47. There is a 50% chance each round that this creature will use its breath weapon, a cone of fire 50' long and 10' wide. The chimera can breathe fire up to three times per day.

Ogre Shows His Stuff

About an hour after the chimera attack, Sir Bryan orders the caravan to halt near the bank of a trailside stream. This quick break allows the PCs and the other guards to refill their waterskins and stretch their legs a bit. As the PCs mill about, a tremendous snapping sound comes from the woods nearby. Although the adventurers may think otherwise, the caravan is not under attack. After a few dramatic seconds, Ogre emerges from the underbrush dragging an enormous fallen tree limb behind him. The huge man promptly breaks the thick branch across his knee and then, noticing that everyone is looking at him, mumbles, "Duh . . . just gettin' duh firewood."

Bugbear Bandits

Late in the afternoon, the caravan rounds a bend only to find the trail blocked by a fallen tree trunk. Unless the PCs immediately voice suspicions of a possible ambush here, they will be surprised by a volley of arrows fired by 10 bugbear archers, while another 10 bugbears burst from the surrounding forest to engage both the PCs and the bhuts in hand-to-hand combat. Among the bugbear foot soldiers is their leader, Lord Tangulwizkers, who fights with his magical *sword +1, +2 vs. spell-casters.*

Due to their great strength, bugbears get a +1 bonus to all hit and damage rolls. It should be noted that Lord Tangulwizkers (with his magical sword) is the only bugbear capable of damaging the bhuts. The other bugbears strike and shoot at the bhuts, but their blows (though they tear at clothing and armor) draw no blood from their foes. Afterward, the bhuts tend to imaginary cuts and bruises, blessing their marvelous "luck."

Lord Tangulwizkers: AC 5; HD 3+1; hp 23; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 (magical sword); Dmg by weapon type; Save F3; ML 9; AL C; BD/27.

Bugbears (10 archers, 9 foot soldiers): hp 15 (foot soldiers), 11 (archers); #AT 1 sword or arrow; Dmg by weapon type; other statistics as per Lord Tangulwizkers. Each bugbear carries a sword. The archers (who use long bows) use their swords only if forced into melee combat.

Each bugbear carries a small pouch containing 3-24 cp and 3-18 sp. In addition to this spare change, Lord Tangulwizkers's pouch also holds a large topaz worth 750 gp.

As the great tree is being cleared from the path, Sir Bryan sees a chance to enhance the credibility of his story by suggesting that the bugbear raiders may have attacked under the orders of his brother Malcolm. By interrogating any captives or by using a *speak with the dead* spell on a vanquished foe, the PCs should be able to learn that the bugbears were not in league with Sir Bryan's evil half-brother (who is a fiction, anyway).

Man-Eaters in the Moonlight

Shortly before sunset, Sir Bryan gives the order to halt the wagons and set up camp for the night. Once the horses are safely secured, Ogre builds a fire and Petri prepares a generous pot of rabbit stew. Sir Bryan invites the PCs to join the feast, and if the PCs accept the offer they can enjoy a tasty meal in the jovial company of the other guards. All the caravan members partake of the rabbit stew (although Lornal constantly complains about Petri's choice of ingredients), so overly suspicious PCs can lay to rest their fears that the stew might be drugged or poisoned. None of the men eat too much, however. They are saving their appetites for the evening's

real main course.

After the meal, Sir Bryan asks the PCs if they would mind doing a share of the night watch duty. Since he is the caravan leader and is responsible for all the important decision-making, Derban adds with a roguish grin, he is excluded from this duty. He also suggests that PC spell-casters (who need their sleep to regain spells) be exempt from guard duty. Sir Bryan can offer the PCs a pair of two-man tents and some blankets if they need them.

Allow the PCs to organize the night watch schedule as they see fit; the seven NPC guards will go along with any fair system. Normally, the guards divide the night into three four-hour shifts, with two men working each shift and the odd man getting the night off. The PCs may suggest four or more shorter shifts or opt for more guards per shift. It doesn't really matter what the PCs plan beyond the first shift, however, for it is at this time that the bhuts will attack.

The caravan members can exercise a limited amount of control over their transformation into bhuts. The men can delay their change into bhut form for up to three hours after sunset. When the three hours have passed, however, they automatically transform into bhuts. They must then retain bhut form until three hours before daybreak, at which time they may change back to human form if they so desire. At dawn, however, bhuts automatically resume their human appearance.

The actual transformation from human to bhut (and vice versa) takes about 30 seconds (3-4 rounds in game terms). The bhuts have developed a clever scheme to synchronize their change into monster form and signal the start of their ambush.

All bhuts not picked for the first shift of guard duty split up and pretend to prepare for sleep: Sir Bryan climbs into his wagon (accompanied by Eric, if he is not on guard duty) while the other bhuts pitch a couple of tents. These remaining bhuts spread themselves out through the camp as best they can, some crawling into the tents while others hop into the back of the second wagon.

Shortly after everyone has settled in for the night, Petri kicks off a series of "Good nights," signalling the other caravan members to begin the change to bhut form. At the end of this humorous exchange of pleasantries, Sir Bryan unleashes a scream of terror. Once the PCs rush to Bryan's wagon to see what's wrong, the other bhuts emerge from their quarters and attack. Sir Bryan delays his transformation long enough to ensure that he can cast a few spells at the PCs before he becomes a bhut.

The following boxed text gives an account of the bhuts' ambush. Should any of the bhuts with a speaking part in this episode be on guard duty with the PCs, he casually turns his back to them while delivering his lines (and changing into bhut form!).

> Darkness envelops the camp, and the chirping and humming of hundreds of insects fills the night air. Over this soothing chorus you suddenly hear Petri's voice call out, "Good night, Gord!"
>
> You hear a soft chuckle and then Gord's voice answers, "Good night, Petri. And good night to you, Ogre." A loud grunt, snort, and a contented sigh are the only replies.
>
> "G'night, Gord," comes Becton's voice, "and good night Petri, Ogre, Eric, and to you, good Sir Rickinson."
>
> Rickinson, in turn, rattles off his own eloquent "Good nights" to everyone in the camp, his voice growing hoarse in the process. If he is enamored of a PC female, he ends his lengthy discourse by adding, in a very raspy but poetic tone, "And pleasant dreams to that very special someone whose radiant smile is brighter than the mid-day sun, whose lovely [blue, brown, or green] eyes are deeper than [Lake Amsorak or the Malpheggi Swamp; the DM should use substitutes if his campaign is not set in the D&D Known World] and 10 million times more beautiful, and whose voice is even sweeter than that of a fair elven princess who gargles honey . . ."
>
> "Quiet, you fools," Lornal interrupts with a gruff bark, "before you draw every monster within 10 miles to us like moths to a flame!"
>
> An immediate silence falls over the camp as the other guards grasp the wisdom in Lornal's words. The quiet is short lived, however, for suddenly a piercing screech of terror erupts from Sir Bryan's wagon, spooking your horses and sending an icy chill racing down your spines.

The following boxed text assumes that the PCs immediately rush to investigate Sir Bryan's scream. Allow the PCs to interrupt your reading of this text if they ask questions or take some other action. If any PC has witnessed a guard's change into bhut form, this part of the ambush will not take place; instead, a wild free-for-all is likely to ensue.

> You and your friends find Sir Bryan standing alone just outside his wagon. His eyes are bugged out in fear, and his beard and moustache are badly disheveled. He looks around wildly and shouts, "The wizard! The wizard! The wizard Malcolm hired . . . was in there . . . in my wagon . . . standing over me . . . standing over me, saying—" and Bryan begins to mutter strange words and phrases that sound like a magic spell.

Sir Bryan has two rounds in which to cast spells before he completely transforms into a bhut. He begins with a *hold person* spell cast against four random PCs, then uses his *polymorph other* spell against a PC spell-caster, if possible.

While Bryan is casting his spells, the other bhuts engage the adventurers in melee combat. Some bhuts attempt to take on particular PCs: Gord and Becton battle any fighter who has a nice sword or impressive armor (they get to claim these spoils if the bhuts triumph). Petri tries to match his speed against the quickest PC (probably a thief), and Lornal attacks any PC who has been particularly cheery during the adventure. Sir Rickinson, needless to say, directs his attention toward the female PC he has been courting. He leaps at her, a wild look in his eyes and a toothy grin on his face, and with a dramatic gesture toward the moon overhead growls, "R-r-r-romantic, isn't it?" He then begins stalking his beloved, adding in a hungry tone, "You look good tonight, my lady. R-r-r-real good!"

Combat Notes

The bhuts' statistics appear in the "Meet the Bhuts" section of the module. The DM should adjust basic bhut statistics for the special abilities of the individual bhuts. For example, Gord gains bonuses for his high Strength and Dexterity scores but suffers a penalty for

low Wisdom. Therefore, the DM should add the Strength bonus to Gord's claw damage (Strength does not increase a bhut's bite damage) and apply a −1 penalty to his Saving Throws vs. magical spells. Dexterity bonuses are already figured into the armor class statistics listed for each bhut.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs defeat the bhuts, they may rifle through the bhuts' wagons, claiming any treasures they find. The wagons themselves are valuable, should the adventurers think of selling them. Sir Bryan's wagon, complete with living quarters and a secret compartment, is worth 1,000 gp. The second wagon is worth around 700 gp.

The bird hanging in the cage in Sir Bryan's wagon opens several possibilities for further adventure. As explained previously, this bird is actually a *polymorphed* captive of the bhuts. The identity of this captive is left for the DM to decide, but three possibilities, based on the people and lands described in the D&D Gazetteer series, follow.

Fredrikka of Dovehold (9th-level Glantrian sorceress). This young lady recently graduated from the Great School of Magic in Glantri City and has since been traveling throughout the Known World in search of adventure. Her parents rule the obscure barony of Dovehold in a wooded valley of the Wendarian Ranges far to the north. Returning Fredrikka to her home would provide the PCs with a wearying amount of travel, but this would be the least of their problems. Clerics are outlawed in Glantri and are routinely executed when discovered. Dwarves and halflings traveling through these lands might find themselves coveted for magical research by a mad wizard or two. (See GAZ3 for more details about the Principalities of Glantri).

Ahmed Al-Hussain of Kirkuk (5th-level fighter). Ahmed is a handsome, well-tanned warrior from the village of Kirkuk in the Emirates of Ylaruam. He is most thankful for being rescued by the PCs and offers to throw a great party in their honor if they accompany him to his desert home. Such a celebration could be used to introduce the PCs to the Ylari customs of coffee-drinking and storytelling. Kirkuk is described in detail in GAZ2 *The Emirates of Ylaruam*, which also includes a number of adventures within the village's walls.

Aldan Volstrake (5th-level fighter/3rd-level merchant). Aldan is a friendly, brown-haired man with an outgoing personality and a silver tongue. His way with words and ability to put people at ease with his pleasant speech is an essential asset for someone in his line of work. A former adventurer, Aldan invested his wealth into his own business, the Volstrake Mercantile Trading Company based in the city of Selenica in the Republic of Darokin. If the PCs enjoyed their one-day stint as caravan guards for Sir Bryan, Aldan can offer them similar employment protecting some of his wagons. See GAZ11 *The Republic of Darokin*, for more information on the merchant character class and hints for running merchant- and caravan-based adventures. Ω

Continued from page 14

The chest becomes visible when touched. Inside it is a *short sword +1*, three *arrows +3*, five *darts +5* (usable only by a wizard-class character), a potion of *extra-healing*, a *ring of protection +2*, 500 pp, 850 gp, and five gems (values 3,000, 1,000 (×2), 500, and 300).

Concluding the Adventure

If the adventurers are unsuccessful in driving the hobgoblins out in time, the keep and its belongings will escheat to the Lords of Waterdeep. The Lords send out a full company of men-at-arms and cavalry with siege engines to retake it, and they succeed. The adventurers will have to find riches and glory elsewhere.

If the PCs are successful, Uncle's nephew or niece receive the title "Squire of South Kryptgarden" along with a deed to the keep and land. This relative is summoned before one of the Lords of Waterdeep, who demands fealty and explains to the PC that there is a condition to the deed: the land's new occupant must keep the area clear of monsters.

If the DM feels that giving low-level PCs a keep of their own is too grand a gesture, then the Lords of Waterdeep might opt to put the keep in trust, stationing armed soldiers there until the inheritor has gained sufficient personal power to warrant giving the keep back (if the Lords of Waterdeep are so inclined).

Avenues for additional adventures and role-playing are endless. Some ideas are as follows:

—Thirty days after this adventure, the chief of the Lostafinga tribe sends another troop of hobgoblins to relieve the one that was on duty, and the adventurers may find the keep reoccupied when they get back.

—Thieves or other NPCs in Waterdeep hear of the PCs' success and try to secure the keep for themselves.

—The Tree Ghost barbarian tribe decides that their ancestral totem is hidden in Kryptgarden Forest, and they want to use the keep as a base of operations for their search.

—The PCs decide to further fortify and inhabit the keep; settlers and the means to provision them must be found.

—The annual real estate tax bill arrives and money must be raised to pay it.

Whatever course the campaign takes, the adventurers will find the taking and securing of Uncle's keep a great platform for taking off into more adventures in the savage northern frontier of the Forgotten Realms. Ω

MERC: 2000

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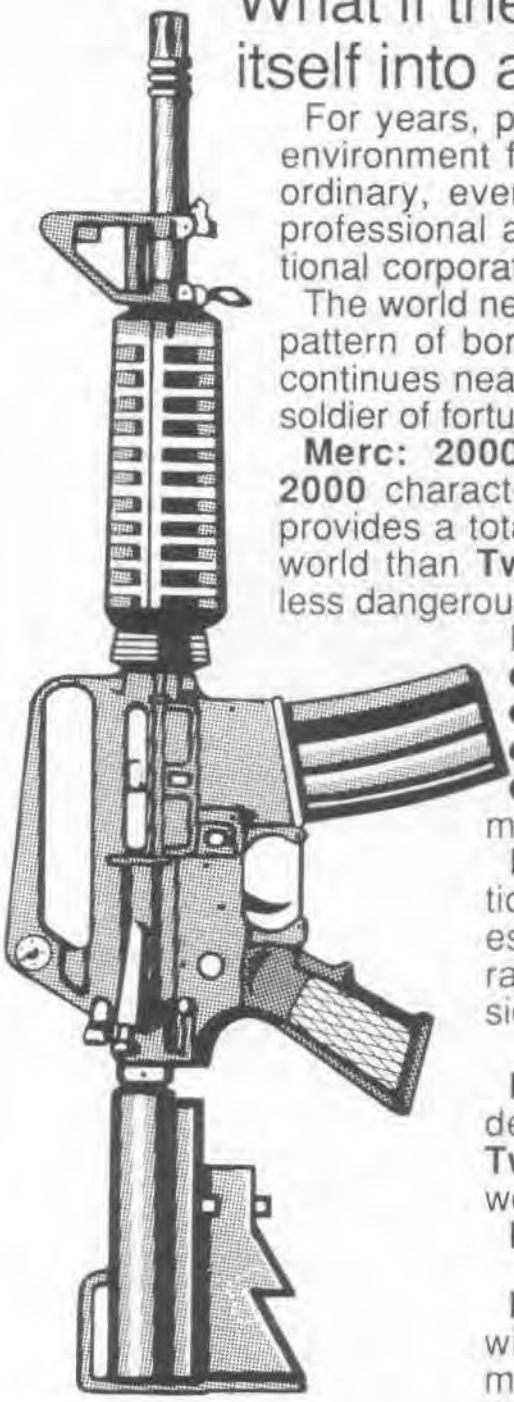

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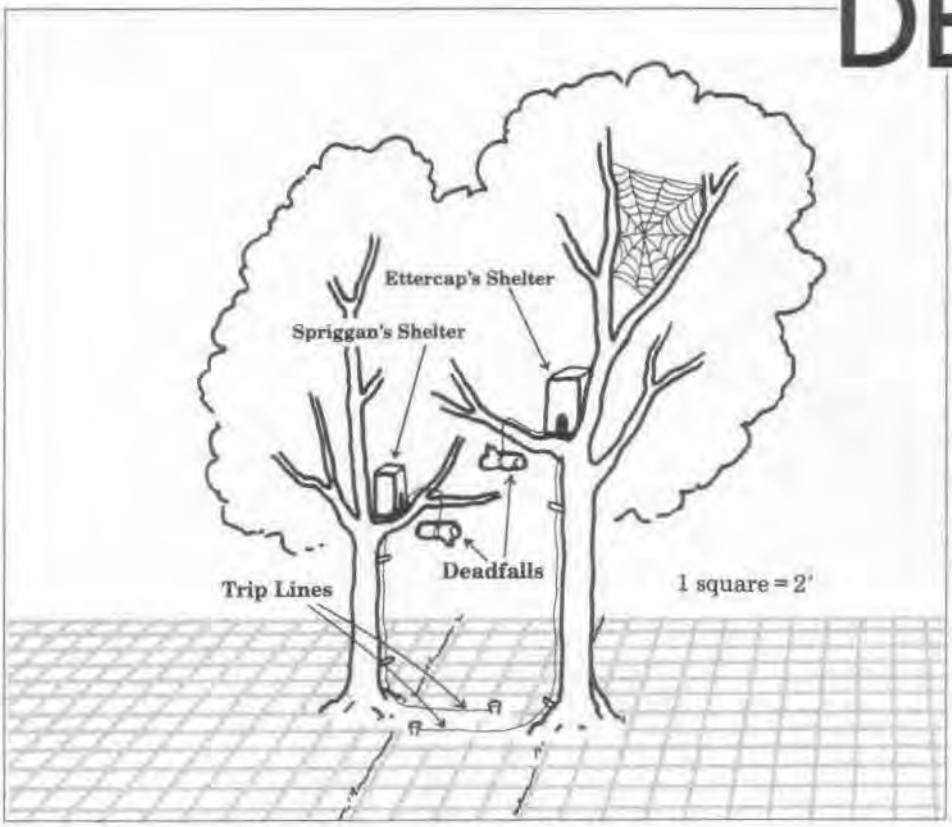


Enjoy your trip. The monsters certainly will.

BY JAY OUZTS

"Deadfalls on Nightwood Trail" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition adventure for 3-6 characters of 3rd or 4th level (a total of about 15 total levels). The party should include a variety of races and classes, and the presence of a thief would be helpful.

This adventure can be inserted in any campaign at any time the player characters are traveling along a trail through a dark, temperate forest. The names of specific places can be changed to make the adventure compatible with any campaign setting.

Adventure Background

Snarrak, a spriggan with a nasty temper, was traveling with his clan in the Nightwoods, looking for a merchant caravan to rob or a trapper to torment. Suddenly, the group was ambushed by an elite regiment of the Frezalian Elvish Community Forest Patrol. One by one, his companions fell victim to the elves' arrows and spells. After several minutes of combat, Snarrak realized the battle was lost. To protect himself, he fled deeper into the Nightwoods.

Throughout his life, Snarrak had relied on his comrades to do most of the work, especially leaving tasks of hard labor for others to do. He stayed in the back of the pack, allowing his companions to handle most of the fighting, too. Only when the rest of the clan threatened him with bodily harm did Snarrak bother to lift a finger to do anything, and even then he didn't work very hard or very long. Now, however, he was on his own.

Pondering his fate, Snarrak wandered along a trail frequented by trappers and hunters. Suddenly, he found himself entangled in a net dropped from the trees above. Before he could react, an ettercap leaped onto him from a large oak tree, knocking him prone.

Snarrak, more annoyed than threatened, immediately assumed giant form and ripped the net to shreds. This caught the ettercap completely by surprise. After all, he was expecting his victim to be merely a small, weak gnome. Before the ettercap could act, Snarrak slammed his assailant's body against a tree trunk, nearly knocking the ettercap unconscious.

Snarrak yelled loudly and drew his broad sword as he moved closer to the stunned ettercap and prepared to smite the creature in the neck. At that point, Snarrak noticed out of the corner of his eye that a giant spider, the ettercap's pet, was closing in for the attack.

Still nursing a few wounds from his skirmish with the elves (he had been hit by a stray arrow and, while fleeing, had tripped over a log and skinned his knee), Snarrak didn't want to tangle with two venomous creatures at once. Not only was this far too dangerous, but it was also far too much work. Thus, he decided to ask for a truce.

Not knowing the ettercap's tongue, Snarrak tried sign language. He showed the peace sign, which the ettercap understood. The badly injured creature chirped and screeched something to his pet, and the spider halted its advance.

Using a combination of voice inflections and sign language, Snarrak explained to the ettercap that a net was not the most effective trap, especially against large creatures like spriggans. Snarrak, having some knowledge of traps himself, drew crude diagrams of pits, snares, a crossbow trap, and a deadfall (a trap that drops a heavy weight on its victim).

Judging from the way the ettercap pointed at the diagram and made gleeful chirps, the deadfall seemed to fascinate him. Thus, Snarrak began to help the ettercap construct a deadfall, using

ON NIGHTWOOD TRAIL

a section of log about 3′ in diameter as the killing weight. (Actually, the ettercap did all the work; Snarrak just showed him how to do it.)

Once the trap was constructed, the ettercap (who had quite an aptitude for rigging deadly traps) began making a few modifications. He lined the bottom of the weight with several sharpened bones, on which he gnawed to coat with his own deadly venom. Finally, he convinced the giant spider to cover the weight with its sticky webs so that the victim could be reeled in for the kill. Later, they constructed a second deadfall just beyond the first to increase the chances of success.

The trap worked like a charm and soon claimed its first victim, a human thief who had fled into the woods to avoid apprehension by the authorities. Snarrak agreed to give the spider and ettercap first choice of cuts of meat if he could have the victim's valuables. Not having any use for treasure, the ettercap agreed.

Thus, the three sinister beings forged a profitable alliance. To Snarrak, it is heaven on earth. He is now able to spend his time doing the things he loves most: sleeping and brooding over his treasure. The trap provides him with a decent meal each day and an occasional piece of treasure with a minimal amount of work on his part. Sure, the ettercap gets on his nerves from time to time, and the language barrier makes trying to communicate with him difficult ("Why can't that stupid spider-lover learn the Common tongue?"). Nevertheless, it's a small price to pay for such a carefree lifestyle.

Despite Snarrak's annoying laziness, rank body odor, and exceptionally loud snoring, the ettercap values the alliance in turn. The spriggan knows a great deal more about certain intelligent races, such as gnomes and humans, than does the ettercap. Furthermore, Snarrak's strength allows him to lift larger prey than the ettercap can move. Of course, the ettercap isn't foolish enough to trust the spriggan completely. Each night, he and the spider take turns keeping watch in case the spriggan should decide to try something sneaky.

The Trap

While traveling through the Nightwoods, the PCs stumble across the deadfalls. Each PC who enters a square crossed by a trip wire has a 4-in-6 chance to spring the trap. When the trap is sprung, the weight drops on anyone standing within 2′ of the center of the wire.

The trap may be detected by a thief who is deliberately searching for traps in the area, but a −40 penalty is applied to his percent chance to detect it (the trap is outdoors and is not the sort that thieves are skilled at finding). It may also be found by a priest's *detect snares & pits* or *find traps* spell, or by magical devices that locate traps of this sort. In any event, the chances that anyone in the group will be searching for the trap is virtually nil under normal circumstances.

Should the party manage to avoid the trap, Snarrak and his partners attack if they outnumber the PCs. Otherwise, they fight only in self-defense, preferring to wait for something else to spring the trap.

Those characters unfortunate enough to be hit with the weight take 1d8 + 10 hp damage. Furthermore, each victim must make a saving throw vs. the poison that coats the sharp bones protruding from the weight. Failure to save results in death in 1-4 turns.

Next, a dexterity check on 4d6 must be made to avoid being stuck in the webs that cover the weight. Those who fail this check can break free from the webs in one round for every point of strength less than 19. Those who make successful checks are still stuck but can break free in half as much time. PCs with 19 or higher strength scores are unaffected by the sticky webs.

When the trap is sprung, the ettercap pulls the weight up (along with any stuck PCs) at a rate of 5′ per round. He can pull up any creature weighing less than 180 lbs. without assistance from the spriggan. Meanwhile, Snarrak, who begins the adventure in his tree in small form, *scares* any PCs who are not trapped, then fires at them with his light crossbow in the next round.

The giant spider, who has been waiting in its webs, attacks any free PCs on the ground. Although its intelligence is low, it knows how to avoid springing the second deadfall trap. If all the free PCs have been killed or driven away, the spider attacks any living PCs still stuck in the traps.

In subsequent rounds, the spriggan uses *shatter* and *affect normal fires* spells if such would be useful. Otherwise, he fires his crossbow until he runs out of quarrels. At that point, he leaps to the ground and assumes giant form, engaging PC survivors in melee. The ettercap, once he has pulled up any trapped PCs, climbs down and assists the spider in fighting on the ground. He, too, uses extreme caution to avoid tripping the second deadfall.

Snarrak (spriggan): Int average; AL CE; AC 3 (5); MV 9 (15); HD 4 (8 + 4); hp 24 (48); THAC0 17 (11); #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type (by weapon type + 7); SA spells, thief abilities; SD assume giant size (see statistics in parentheses); SZ S (L); ML 15; XP 1,400; MM2. Snarrak is armed with a light crossbow and a broad sword. He wears a *ring of feather falling* on his right hand and carries a quiver containing six crossbow bolts at his left side.

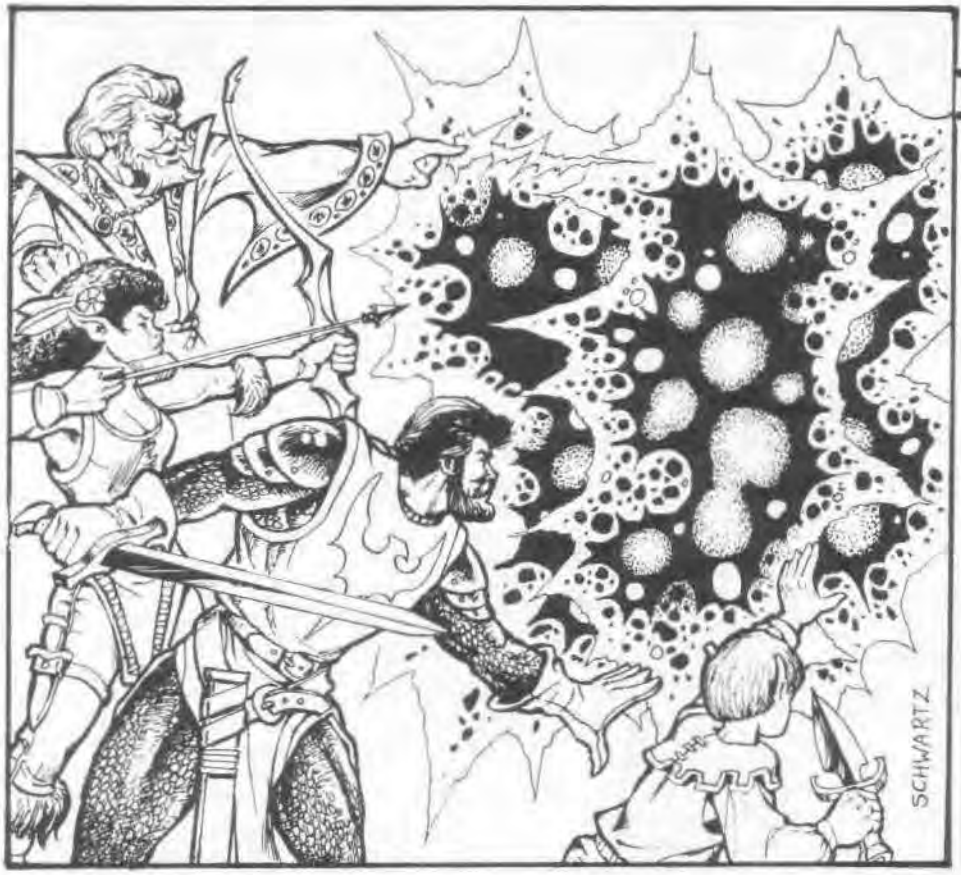
Ettercap: Int low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 29; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA poison; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975; MC.

Giant spider: Int low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4 + 4; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; MC (spider).

The Lairs

The odd allies live in treehouses built on wooden platforms held together by the ettercap's own silky strands and small bits of spider web. Each of the partners has a small treehouse made of wood, mud, and webs to provide shelter from the elements. The ettercap's home is a cramped structure measuring only 4′ wide, 5′ long, and 5′ high. A pile of leaves, upon which the ettercap sleeps, covers the floor of the dwelling. Several old bones and animal parts have been shoved into the corners, giving the place the putrid stench of decaying flesh.

Continued on page 54



THE CURSE AND THE QUEST

BY CRAIG BARRETT AND CHRISTOPHER KEDERICH

A cursed book leads you on a quest you can't ignore.

Artwork by Stephen F. Schwartz

Craig tells us: "This project was the proverbial meeting of genius with genius, which at times can be explosive. Since I was neither of the geniuses in question, it was interesting to watch Kit argue with himself. In spite of all that, the adventure did manage to get completed anyway."

Kit claims to be a refugee from the Twilight Zone whose current mailing address is in the Colorado mountains. While not as volatile as his more apocalyptic friends, he approves of the stockpiling of rare vintages and imported mythologies. His ranch is a mobile danger zone inhabited by three malevolent but lovable dog-wolf hybrids. This makes the conducting of an AD&D® game at his residence interesting, to say the least.

"The Curse and the Quest" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-6 characters of 4th to 8th level (about 30 total levels). The party must include at least one player character who is a cleric with healing spells (and preferably healing potions), and a mage of at least 6th level (the *read magic* spell is vital). The party should be capable of rapid overland movement. It will be convenient if the party includes sufficient henchmen or followers to bring the total up to eight members. A ranger or a druid would be helpful.

This adventure takes place on the western slope of a high mountain range, within one day's march of Mount Yvvivor and the Vale of Yvvivor. The weather is generally mild, but chilly at night due to the altitude. The Dungeon Master should limit cloud cover, since it's important for the PCs to be able to accurately determine the phase of the moon. Three days after the night the adventure begins, the moon will be full; if the PCs have not completed the adventure within two days after that, they have virtually no chance of survival.

In locating this adventure in his own campaign, the DM should keep in mind that the Vale of Yvvivor is not isolated, but it is wild, remote, and nearly forgotten.

One final warning: This adventure is not for players who are easily distracted or who have difficulty keeping their attention centered on their goal.

For the Dungeon Master

Mt. Yvvivor, in the Vale of Yvvivor, is one of those rare places where the channels of power from many worlds intersect. At midnight on the five primary days of a full moon, a Focus of these powers is formed, and the very essence of magic is called forth. During these five days it is possible to create magical items of enormous power, with comparatively little difficulty (see "The Blank Page" for details). However, the effects of the Focus make the casting of magic spells difficult (see "Magical Effects of the Focus" for details).

Specific descriptions of the Focus and the magical route used to reach it are given in the sections titled "The Blank Page," "The Swamp and the Island," and "The Focus."

So difficult and dangerous is the Focus to use, however, that only a few magical items have ever been completed there. The most powerful of these—and the most deadly—is the *Book of Blood* created by the 28th-level mage Agrackan Akarias and cursed by the 30th-level mage Dylihos of Djerdan (in revenge for Agrackan's betrayal of him). As a result of Dylihos' curse, the *Book of Blood* brings doom to all who touch it, and only when the book is destroyed in the Focus itself will the doom be ended. Fearful hands have carried the book toward its final destruction for decades, in a grim kind of relay race. Now, the end of that race is almost in sight, for the last possessor of the book managed to carry it within a day's march of Yvvivor before he was killed.

For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> It is late in the evening, the end of a long day's travel. Despite tales of marauding bandits heard at the last town, three days behind you, none have been encountered so far in your journey. The heavy forest has proved free of dangerous monsters. The one major disappointment is the road itself, called a highway by the townspeople but really little more than a mountain track. Even so, you have learned from the occasional traveling merchant that another town (offering little better hospitality than the last) is three days' march ahead of you.

> A little off the road to the east is a small deserted glen sheltered by trees and bushes, with a brook running nearby. This appears to be a perfect camp site, protected by nature against casual observation.

If the PCs enter the glen, read the following to the players:

> Beside the stream, you find what looks like a human skeleton, badly dismembered and several weeks old. The clothes are in shreds, but not far from the skeleton is a half-hidden leather satchel. In the dim light, a scatter of silvery coins is visible, and the remnants of a war hammer that looks as though lightning had struck it several times.

The Book

Inside and scattered around the satchel are 30 silver coins, and in the satchel is a large book. If any of the PCs touch the book, the party members feel a chill as if a cold breeze had suddenly blown over them.

The book is Agrackan's *Book of Blood*. Embossed on its cover is a silver circle containing a bastard sword pointed upright. The name Agrackan is written in gold just above the circle. The book has a strange musty smell; any fighter will associate the smell with that of rotting flesh. Anyone who touches the book with hand or glove or gauntlet, and any companion within 20 paces of them at that moment, receives the *curse of the shimmering wrath* (see sidebar).

If anyone opens the book without first speaking the name of Agrackan, the spell written on the inside front cover of the book is immediately activated (*vampiric touch*, cast at 4th level, for 2-12 hp damage). This spell will operate whenever the book is improperly opened.

Because the book was created at the Focus, it can be destroyed only in the manner described in "The Dream" and cannot be damaged in any other way. Thus, attempts to tear a page (no matter how much strength is employed) or to burn any part of the book (even with magical fire) will fail.

A warning is written on the first page of the book, in the margin, in nonmagical script and in a handwriting different from Agrackan's. The warning tells of the need to say Agrackan's name before opening the book and explaining that Agrackan has written explosive runes in the inside back cover of the book. These runes "wander" through the book at random each time the book is closed, and there is a 10% chance that the runes will be present in any particular spell being read, even if that spell has been read before without harm. Obviously, since neither the book nor its pages can be damaged, the explosion of the runes will not harm the book in any way. The runes can explode only three times per day.

Written in the book in magical script are the following spells, each in Agrackan's handwriting: *hold portal, contact other plane, conjure elemental, trap the soul, Serten's spell immunity, chain lightning, enchant an item, gate, reincarnate, speak with dead* (a wizard version of the 3rd-level priest spell), *binding, demand, group succor* (a wizard version of the 7th-level priest spell; this spell operates for anyone touching the wizard at the time it is activated), *shape change, fly, water breathing, enchanted weapon, dispel magic, Rary's mnemonic enhancer, pass wall*.

The spell on the last page, however, is not in Agrackan's handwriting. The *curse of the shimmering wrath* (see sidebar) wrote itself into the book as a consequence of Dylihos's dying curse. This spell was pronounced by Dylihos after Agrackan captured and tortured him to make him reveal all his magical knowledge, and is Dylihos's revenge against anyone who uses the book in which that stolen knowledge is recorded. This spell is possible (for mortals) only as a death curse by a 25th-level or higher mage, for it concentrates all the wizard's magical power and all of his life-force into this single act. The spell also requires augmentation by a source of great magical power, such as a Focus.

In the very center of the book is one page, both sides of which are apparently blank, that will not respond to any *read magic* spell.

Each page of the book is a permanent scroll of magic (usable once each day and each day renewing itself), and usable without risk of spell failure (see the AD&D 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 145). This is, after all, effectively an artifact and not a scroll.

All spells are written at the 28th-level except the *curse of the shimmering wrath*.

The Dream

The DM may describe a general mood of foreboding that envelops the glen as the PCs settle down for the night. At midnight, all party members (awake or asleep) have the same dreamlike vision:

> You see the sword on the book's cover rise up in midair and swell to full size. A voice emanates from the sword:
>
> "Hear now the voice of Lamnian, who in his foolishness came to lay hands on the *Book of Blood* and was doomed.
>
> "Dylihos of Djerdan it was who created the *curse of the shimmering wrath* to defend the Focus of Eryhil'n, where magic creation is dangerously simplified. He had discovered the Focus and how to use it by working in conjunction with his associate, Agrackan Akarias, and he thought they were agreed that it should be defended against unwise use. But Dylihos's reckoning was flawed, for he did not understand the ambitions of Agrackan.
>
> "Agrackan drugged Dylihos in an unguarded moment and took Dylihos to the distant citadel of Geryzag, Agrackan's own lair. There, by torture, he drew from Dylihos each of his powerful secrets in turn. Then Agrackan set about to capture his rival's very power. From Dylihos's body would be constructed the terrible *Book of Blood:* His skin would serve for binding; the crushed powder of his bones would make the stark-white pages; from his blood would be made the ink. Thus, the essence of his magic would be bound into the book. This done, Agrackan planned to return to the Focus and there enchant each page of the book as a permanent scroll of magic (to use once each day and each day renew itself).
>
> "But Dylihos was not yet dead, and Agrackan in his arrogance boasted of his intentions once too often. With his dying breath, Dylihos summoned all his mystic strength and pronounced the *curse of the shimmering wrath* (which he had already prepared to guard the Focus itself), that no being should ever touch the *Book of Blood* and live.
>
> "Agrackan knew it not. He slew Dylihos and completed the book at the Focus as he had planned. But the planar gates had opened. At noon of the day after the book was completed, the first of the mindless entities, a shimmering wrath, appeared and attacked Agrackan. Agrackan destroyed it by his magic. Though he then searched for some clue to the strange creature's origin, he found none.
>
> "On the second day, at noon, two wraths arrived and were destroyed as the first had been. On the third day, four came. On the fourth day, sixteen.
>
> "Desperate, then, Agrackan cast about for the source of the wraths' summoning and discovered that it was the *Book of Blood* itself! He thus learned of the doom Dylihos had prepared for him. Before the power of

Shimmering Wrath

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: Any
FREQUENCY: Summoned only by the curse
ORGANIZATION: Special
ACTIVITY CYCLE: Any
DIET: Nil
INTELLIGENCE: Non
TREASURE: Nil
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
NO. APPEARING: 1 the first day, 2 the second day, 4 the third day, 16 the fourth day, 256 the fifth day; on the sixth and later days, the attacks are nonstop
ARMOR CLASS: 4
MOVEMENT: 12
HIT DICE: 4
THAC0: 14
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6 (electric shock)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Shadow chills for 1-4
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Unaffected by cold, electricity, clerical turning, *dispel magic*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Nil
SIZE: M
MORALE: Special
XP VALUE: 175

These entities are combined nonliving energies created from the Negative Material plane and the elemental plane of Lightning. Resembling shadows filled with shimmering points of light, they often go unnoticed until they coalesce into man-size but irregular forms just before attacking the victims specified by the *curse of the shimmering wrath* of Dylihos.

The wraths attack by touch, with a maximum of three wraths attacking a size-M creature at a time, each dealing 1-6 hp electrical damage regardless of armor or clothing. Normal weapons can hit a wrath, and every hit point of damage a wrath inflicts lowers its own hit points by the same number until the wrath is dissipated. In addition, using a metallic weapon to touch or strike a wrath causes 1-6 hp damage per touch to the attacker.

If enough light (the equivalent of full daylight) exists for a wrath to cast a shadow, anyone who is touched by the shadow of a wrath suffers 1-4 hp damage due to cold, regardless of armor or clothing. The wraths are unaffected by cold or electrical attacks and cannot be turned (as undead), nor will a *dispel magic* spell eliminate them. When confronted with protective spells and wards such as *shield, protection from evil, wall of force, wall of iron,* etc., or with physical barriers, the wraths simply become ethereal until the barrier is penetrated (movement at half speed) or circumvented, then coalesce into man form and attack once more.

Wraths are nonintelligent, and their only tactic is to embrace their targets. The wraths continue to appear on schedule, pursuing their victims anywhere through the material planes until the victims are destroyed.

that doom, Agrackan was helpless, for on the fifth day, 256 wraths came. He did not see the sixth day.

"A thief took the book from abandoned Geryzag, whence Agrackan's fear-stricken servants had already fled. Since that day, any who have touched the book have suffered Agrackan's fate.

"Yet there is hope, for I have discerned the end of the curse and I place this *quest* upon you: Go to the Vale of Yvvivor, below the crest of Mount Yvvivor, within two nights before or after the full moon. There find the Focus of Eryhil'n. Once you have reached that place, lay the book within the Focus and pronounce backward the name of the man who made it: Agrackan's it is; Nakcarga's it shall not be! In that moment the book shall be destroyed, and the curse shall be removed from you and placed within the Focus, so that anyone who comes to the Focus after you will suffer the curse.

"Pray, when you hear these words, that the Vale is close and the full moon is at hand—as it was not for me. Pray that those who have borne this curse and this quest before you have carried the book within reach of your goal at a time propitious for your survival.

"This much aid I can give you: Ask, 'Where is the Focus?' and the *Sword of Lamnian* will point your way. If mage you be, know that the sword is part of a medallion set upon the cover of the book and bears the permanent enchantment of *Mordenkainen's sword.* Remove it before you destroy the book and it shall be your reward, if life is not enough.

"When you round the tip of Mt. Yvvivor and the ruins on its flank are in sight, read the blank page in the center of the book and follow the instructions thereon.

"Go! Delay not! And may the gods be your friends."

The sword goes back to the cover of the book, and the vision ends. All the PCs sleep soundly until dawn.

The *Sword of Lamnian*

As previously described, Lamnian put a permanent enchantment of *Mordenkainen's sword* into a medallion and magically placed the medallion upon the front cover of the *Book of Blood.* The "miniature platinum sword with a grip and pommel of copper and zinc" (2nd Edition *Player's Handbook,* page 185) has been implanted into the medallion itself; A mage need only hold the book or the medallion to operate the sword. The medallion/sword has no charges as such but can be used as a sword only once per day (duration 22 rounds, basic chance to hit at 11th level; Lamnian was a 22nd-level mage).

As a guide, the sword points out the most direct route to the Focus (without regard to intervening obstacles) and can be used as often as desired, though this attribute of the medallion will disappear once the book is destroyed. The DM should keep track of the party's location relative to the Focus for this purpose. (The Focus is in the hex marked "8" on the area map.)

The Journey to the Focus

1. The Game Trail. If the PCs choose to ignore Lamnian's warning and do not follow the *quest* (a saving throw should be allowed, as per the *PH,* page 224), the DM is free to destroy them at his leisure. The shimmering wrath should be ideal for the purpose.

At **dawn,** the sword points the PCs eastward through the forest. A short distance from the glen, a game trail leads in the right direction. This part of the forest is thickly overgrown, and mounted travel through it is impossible. Even on the game trail, the intertwining branches makes mounted travel awkward at best (for movement rates see the *DMG,* pages 124-5.) If the PCs keep to the game trail, they should be able reach the edge of the plateau (area 2) before they must next make camp.

The first shimmering wrath appears without warning 1-4 hours after noon on this day. The wrath attacks the *cursed* party member who is farthest from the main body of the party (DM's discretion). A scout, for example, should be attacked before someone in the main group. If the party has kept together, anyone on the outer fringe of the group may be attacked first. If anyone has left the party in order to avoid the curse, the defector should be attacked first. This procedure should be followed on all succeeding days, with the number of wraths increasing each day as specified.

Consult the chart on page 101 of the *DMG* to determine if the PCs have random encounters during the march through the forest. If an encounter is indicated, roll 1d10 and see the Forest Random Encounters table.

2. The Plateau's Edge. When the PCs come to the end of the game trail, they find themselves at the edge of a long drop-off to the valley below.

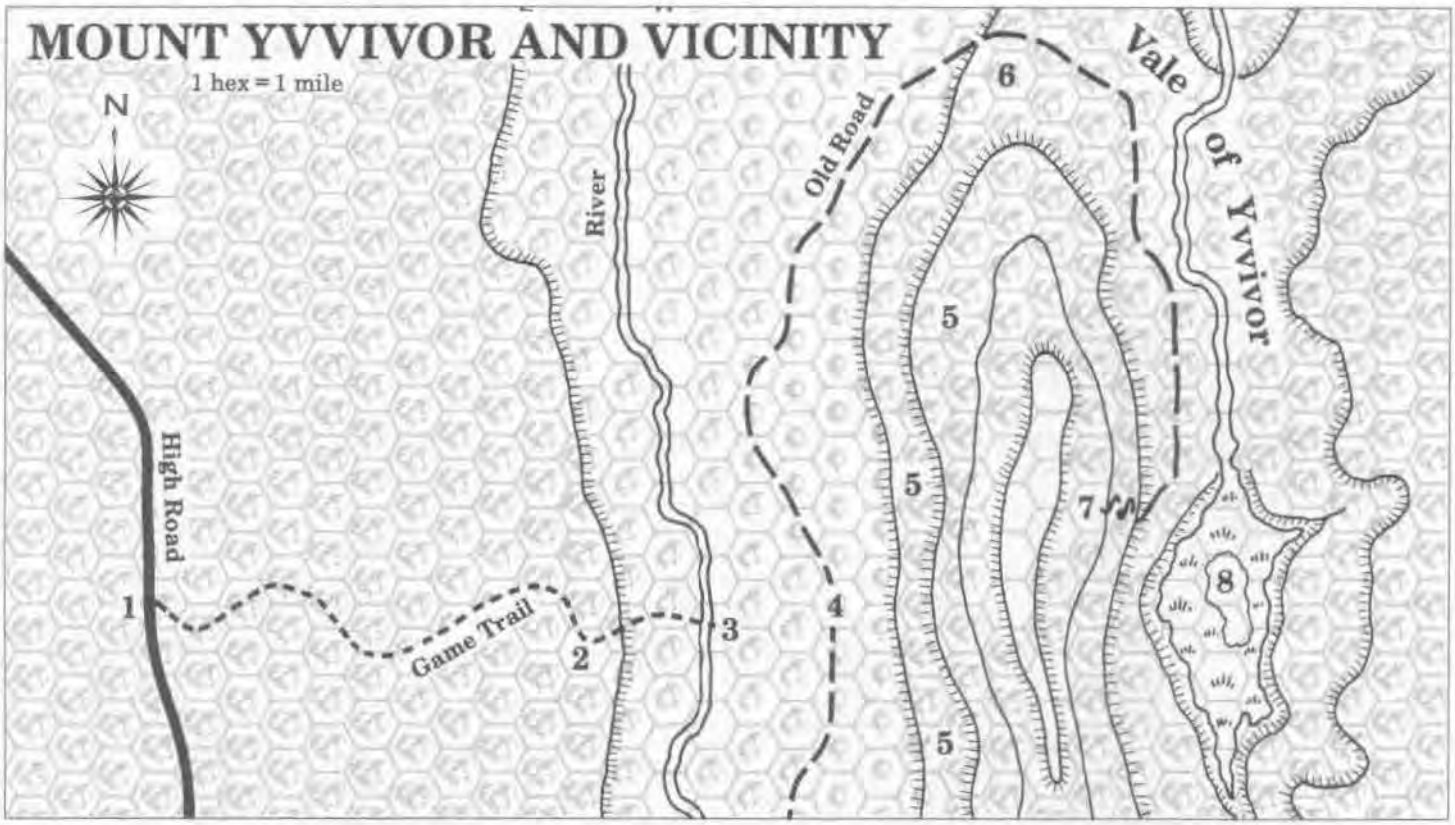
The game trail ends at the edge of a plateau. The forest has thinned here, and you can see some distance ahead. Below you is a small river valley, and across it is a high mountain that rises steeply. You can see that the western slope of that mountain is guarded by sheer cliffs that appear dangerous, perhaps impassable, from this distance. To the south the mountain extends out of sight, but to the north it appears to curve away from you, as though opening a gap or pass on that side.

The descent from the plateau is marred by jumbles of rocks (some of which are boulder sized) and patches of loose gravel interspersed with heavy brush. The only good descent appears to be a continuation of the game trail.

One hundred yards to your right, several boulders sheltered by trees offer what appears to be a good campsite for the night. A sentry on the boulders will be able to see above the trees and across the valley.

The mountain across the valley is Mt. Yvvivor, part of a rugged mountain range. Since the march through the thick forest will have been tiring, it is probable that the PCs will reach this point around dusk and will decide to camp. If they look across the valley during the night, the PCs will be able to see lights flickering along the western ramparts of Mt. Yvvivor, as though sentries or patrols were making their rounds by torch-or lantern-light.

3. The River. If the PCs descend from the plateau by the game trail, it takes two hours to reach the valley floor, and the PCs must lead their mounts. However, if the PCs decide not to use the game trail, the time taken for the descent triples. In this case, for every 10 minutes off the trail, each member of the party (including animals) must make a dexterity check on 1d20. Anyone who fails a check takes 1-6 hp fall-



ing damage. If any animal's cumulative damage during this descent comes to more than 25% of its total, the animal has broken a leg and (in lieu of a *cure* spell) must be abandoned. Good PCs will put a gravely injured animal out of its misery. Thirty minutes after completing the descent, the PCs should reach the river.

> The valley floor is covered by a moderate forest that presents little obstruction between you and the river. There is plenty of cover along the game trail, however, and only a relatively short distance between the slope and the river.
>
> Where the game trail meets the river, there appears to be a watering place where boulders give both cover and observation perches. Tracks in the mud of the riverbank show that many animals have used this watering place. The water is fresh and cold, but along this flank of Mt. Yvvivor the river has a wide channel and is neither deep nor swift.

If the PCs take the game trail to the river, they encounter three giant weasels at the watering hole.

Giant weasels (3): Int animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 21, 18, 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SA drain blood (on melee round after successful bite, for 2-12 hp damage per melee round); SZ M; ML 10; XP 175; MC.

These weasels are very hungry and immediately attack the first party member who appears. Since weasel pelts sell for 1,000-6,000 gp, the PCs may want to recover the pelt if they make a kill (DM's discretion for how long that will take).

Just a few yards north of the watering hole is a convenient ford. The water comes up to a human's knees, and mounts can be led across without hazard. Because of the slippery rocks on the river bottom, anyone who attempts to ride across the ford has a 50% chance of being thrown when his mount slips.

On the east side of the river, tracks show that a mounted party has been here recently; any ranger or druid can tell that last night a party of men came to the ford but did not cross. From the tracks, the party numbered six. One person, who wore military-style boots, dismounted.

If the PCs consult the *Sword of Lamnian* for directions, they travel due east from this point, through light forest. If they move rapidly, in 90 minutes they reach a road. Although very old and long neglected, the road is usable. Tracks indicate that heavy and light wagons have passed this way since the last rain, with at least 50 persons in the northbound party.

4. The Monument. A dozen yards into the trees on the east side of the old road is an old black obelisk, sufficiently hidden by foliage so that it is difficult to see from the road. The inscriptions are intelligible to any PC who reads dwarven script.

> On the western side of the obelisk, the inscription reads: "To the greater glory of King Raphgadarn, son of Perimond Mountainbreaker, lord of the Dwarves of Yvvivor. Any who come to his palace on the crown of Mount Yvvivor will overlook great magic!"
>
> On the south side of the obelisk, the inscription reads: "These Dwarves of Clan Yvvivor died while

bearing the gifts of the gods—weapons and armor kissed by the fire of Yvvivor Vale—to their brothers-in-arms in the war against the drow and the red dragons. Remember their names." There follows a list of over 70 names.

On the north side of the obelisk is a stylized picture-map, showing Mount Yvvivor and the Vale of Yvvivor. The shape of Yvvivor is distinctive, indicating the viewpoint of someone standing north of the mountain. The route north around the tip of Mount Yvvivor into the Vale of Yvvivor is clearly displayed in the picture. The picture also shows a castle high on the eastern side of the mountain, and a templelike structure behind it.

On the east side of the obelisk, the inscription is much cruder than those on the other three sides, as though the hand that wrote this was less skilled and used poorer tools: "We sinned and paid the price for our sins. Clan Yvvivor is ended. Take warning and beware the Vale of Yvvivor. By the hand of Deghnaror, son of Raphgadarn."

When the PCs have finished examining the obelisk, they hear a rustling among the trees. If they investigate, they see the figure of a man scurrying away.

Landris Slackmind: AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; R10; hp 68; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 11 (13), D 12 (15), C 16, I 5 (10), W 15 (14), Ch 4 (9); ML 7.

The statistics in parentheses are for Landris in his prime—but he's no longer the man he was, having been badly injured by a mage long ago. He has the appearance of a very old man with ugly facial scars. However, he's still tough. Events of recent days have brought forward memories of the past, and he's badly disoriented and frightened.

Some weeks ago, a newcomer, Duke Karl of Charthur, invaded the area of Mt. Yvvivor. An arrogant, greedy man with dreams of empire, the duke chanced upon word of a very old dwarf named Nagathorn who was drinking in the taverns of Charthur and boasting of great magical power once possessed by a lost dwarven clan. The duke had Nagathorn brought to the palace and questioned, and became convinced that at least a portion of what Nagathorn said about Clan Yvvivor was true. Late last year, an expedition was organized by Duke Karl, to be led by himself since he trusted no one else to discover and return with powerful magical devices. But Mt. Yvvivor is marked on few maps, and Nagathorn's memory had crucial gaps. It wasn't until two weeks ago that Duke Karl's expedition came up the old road to Yvvivor.

Eager to find magical treasures, Duke Karl made a pretense of scouring the area for possible defenders, missed the obelisk entirely, and finally set up camp at the site of Raphgadarn's ruined castle, on the crown of Yvvivor (area 7 on the map). Duke Karl's patrols did, however, manage through sheer luck to lay hands on Landris. He was brought to the duke and severely questioned before he was dismissed as a crazy old man who knew nothing. When Landris escaped, it wasn't thought important to go after him.

Now, Landris has found the PCs. He is frightened of them though intrigued by their presence. But his nerves give way and he attempts to run north and a little east, to lose himself in the thick forest at Yvvivor's base. If the PCs attempt to capture Landris, the DM should have the old ranger lead them a merry chase.

If the PCs capture Landris and are harsh in interrogating him, all they'll get is confused babble:

"... don't want me no more ... no use ... Duke don't want me ... Damn his magic eyes! ... gimme a drink o' ale ... Water! Cold river water! ... tell the Duke I won't tell the Duke I won't tell ... fools climb mountains ... fools climb mountains ... Curse the mages! Curse all magic!"

If the PCs are gentle with Landris and coax him, particularly if they have good wine to share, in 1-4 turns he calms down and is willing to talk. He doesn't have much to tell them about the Focus (except some babbling about "magic in the vale ... magic in the vale ... don't go there"), but he tells them everything he knows about the duke. (At the DM's discretion, Landris may tell the PCs everything said about the duke in this section.)

Due to magical torture that Landris underwent years ago, only a *limited wish* spell will cure him. (Landris suffered at the hands of a master illusionist, who used the hidden monsters of the ranger's own subconscious to torment him until his mind and body rebelled from the horror.) Even if the PCs are able and willing to cure him, Landris is unable to tell them much more than before and is unwilling to accompany them or aid them materially.

When Landris senses the PCs are satisfied—or when he deteriorates into pure shivering fear (after 2-8 turns of rough interrogation if the PCs are harsh with him)—he starts whimpering, "... let him go now ... let him go now ..." If the PCs give him a chance, Landris breaks free from them and bolts due east toward the thick forest at Yvvivor's base. He will not accompany them willingly.

There is a 25% chance that the PCs will be discovered by one of the duke's mounted patrols (check every sixth turn). The patrol is making a slow sweep of the old road west of Yvvivor. If no encounter occurs, the patrol passes on, going north along the road. The patrol consists of one officer and five troopers, all mounted.

The officer has received explicit instructions from the duke: Any intruders in the area are to be taken prisoner, or destroyed if they resist. If the PCs are captured, they are taken directly to the duke's camp (area 7), where the duke interrogates them at once.

Officer: AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 65; ring mail, lance, short sword, dagger, shield, treasure type M.

Troopers (5): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 5-8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 15; leather armor, lances, short swords, daggers, shields, treasure type K.

Horses, medium (6): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SZ L; ML 7; XP 65; MC.

If the PCs have successfully interrogated Landris or capture and interrogate one of the patrol, they learn that the only good way to enter the Vale of Yvvivor is to go north around the tip of the mountain. If they decide to go north, see "The Way North." If not, the *Sword of Lamnian* continues to point to the east.

5. The Western Cliffs. If the PCs decide to go due east, it takes them at least three hours of marching through

Forest Random Encounters

1. **Ankheg** (1-6): Int non; AL N; AC overall 2, underside 4; MV 12, burrow 6; HD 1d6+2; THAC0 16-12; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18 (crush) plus 1-4 (acid); SA squirt acid; SZ L-H; ML 9; XP 175-1,400; MC. The ankhegs attempt to ambush the PCs from 1d6+4 feet underground, rising up after the PCs have passed to attack from behind. If a ranger or druid is present with the party, make a wisdom check (+1 to wisdom per each five levels of the character) to determine if the ranger or druid detects the ankhegs during the approach to the ambush. The PC group has a 10% chance (+5% per level of all rangers and druids present, cumulative) of finding traces that lead to the ankhegs' lair, one mile south of the ambush. The lair contains type C treasure.
2. **Giant ants** (5d10+10): Int animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 2 (workers, 90%) or 3 (warriors, 10%); THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (workers), 2-8 (warriors); SA warriors have poison sting; SZ T; ML 9; XP 35 (worker), 175 (warrior); MC. The PCs encounter a column of ants that are in the process of dismembering a dead peryton and carting the pieces away toward their lair. The column blocks the PCs' line of march; if the PCs attempt to fight their way through, the ants attack them. Otherwise, the ants ignore them. If the PCs attempt to follow the column to the ants' lair, after one hour the ants lead them south into dense underbrush through which the PCs cannot follow. If the PC group attempts to circle north around the dead monster, to regain its line of march, it has a 15% chance of getting lost for 1d10+2 turns (−1%/level of all rangers and druids with the party, cumulative), after which it regains its line of march.
3. **Harpies** (1d4+1): Int low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 6, fly 15 (C); HD 7; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6 or 1-3/1-3/weapon; SA singing and *charm;* SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400; MC. The harpies attempt to *charm* and lure to their deaths as many party members as possible. The harpies are far from their lair, which the PCs have no chance to find.
4. **Wild boars** (1-12): Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12 (3d4); SZ S (3' at shoulder); ML 10; XP 175; MC. Only one boar is male (hp 25), but he's in a foul temper and attacks the PCs immediately.
5. **Hill giants** (1-3): Int low; AL CE: AC 3 (5); MV 12; HD 12+1-2; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or by weapon type (2-12+7); SA hurling rocks for 2-16 hp; SZ H; ML 14; XP 3,000; MC. These well-fed adult hill giants are in an unusually good mood. If the PCs appear tired or wounded or are outnumbered, the giants attack the party immediately. Otherwise, they demand a toll of 2 gp per party member before letting the adventurers pass; they will accept 1 gp per person member. If the party gives them less (or nothing), the giants turn sullen and follow the party for 1-4 hours, hoping to find a convenient chance to attack without suffering harm themselves. The giants carry no treasure.
6. **Giant spiders** (1d4+2): Int low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4+4; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA bitten victims save vs. poison or die; SZ L (12' diameter); ML 13; XP 650; MC; treasure type C. This encounter occurs only while the party is moving; otherwise treat as "no encounter." The spiders lurk above the game trail, hidden in the intertwining branches. They drop down and attack the last person in line, hoping to carry the body off before the other adventurers respond. If this fails, the spiders flee from a counterattack. The spiders' lairs are high in the trees, and the sticky webs guarding them festooned with the bones of the spiders' victims. The spiders will defend their lairs desperately.
7. **Bugbears** (2d6+4): Int low to average; AL CE; AC 5 (10); MV 9; HD 3+1; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (2d4) or by weapon type; SA surprise, +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 120; MC. These bugbears are in the process of butchering a pair of wild cattle when the PCs find them. The PCs have a 30% chance (+5% per level of any ranger or druid with the party, cumulative) of detecting the bugbears before being detected. If the PCs detect the bugbears first, the adventurers can attempt to circle around the monsters and avoid the encounter (with a chance to get lost, as for giant ants), or they can attempt to ambush the bugbears. If the PCs destroy the bugbears, roll for treasure types J, K, L, and M.
8. **Stag beetles** (2-12): Int non; AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 7; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 4-16/1-10/1-10; SZ L; ML 13; XP 975; MC. These beetles are looking for food and attack the PCs immediately. The PCs have a 25% chance (+5% per level of any ranger or druid, cumulative) of detecting the attack 1-6 rounds before the beetles arrive.
9. **Pixies** (5d4): Int exceptional; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, fly 12 (B); HD ½; THAC0 20 (16); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spell arrows, cause *confusion* by touch; SD *invisibility,* spells; MR 25%; SZ S; ML 11; XP 270; MC. Naturally *invisible* (becoming visible at will), the pixies carry dagger-sized swords and fine bows with *arrows +4.* The pixies dislike humans, having been abused by them in the past. If even one of the PCs is a human, the pixies will try to hasten the party out of their territory, shepherding them for 1-6 hours, helping them if something delays them, and harassing them if they attempt to stop.
10. **Wild cattle** (5d10+20): Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 1-4; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA stampede; SZ L; ML 4; XP 15-120; MC. Something has spooked this small herd, and it's stampeding along the game trail toward the PCs. On a 1-3 on 1d6, the herd is approaching the PCs from behind; on a 4-6 on 1d6, it is approaching from the PCs' front. The sound of the stampede is muffled by the forest, but the PCs have a 50% chance to detect the stampede 1-3 rounds before it arrives. Any PC caught without cover when the stampede arrives has a 50% chance (minus twice his dexterity) of being trampled; roll 2d4 for any PC trampled to determine how many cattle trample him (for 1-4 hp damage per animal).

heavy forest to reach the base of the cliffs that are Yvvivor's western ramparts. This section of Yvvivor has not been investigated by the duke because it's infested by several small ogre clans, and there's a 20% chance that the PCs will encounter an ogre clan when they reach the base of the cliffs. This chance increases by 5% for every hour the PCs remain at Yvvivor's base.

Ogres (2d6 +6): Int low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 +1; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 or by weapon type; SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 175 (leader 420, chieftain 650); MC.

The ogres appreciate the danger of the duke's forces and make a point of staying out of his way. If the PCs encounter them, the ogres attack merely to drive the PCs back and stop once the PCs begin to retreat. With the constant danger of the duke's men, the ogre's don't want to make anyone too angry.

If the PCs decide to climb Mt. Yvvivor, it will take them 2-12 hours to discover that the cliffs really are impassable.

The Way North

If the PCs decide to go north from the monument, the old road is in good enough condition that the PCs can ride, and even foot movement is at the most favorable rate (see page 125 of the *DMG*). However, if the PCs have not yet met the duke's six-man patrol (see area 4), there is a 50% chance that the patrol will detect them on the road and immediately attack.

If the PCs go north, their daily encounter with the shimmering wraths will probably occur during this section of the journey. (At the DM's option, the Forest Random Encounters table can continue to be used during the trek north.)

If the PCs decide not to risk the old road, they can travel through the woods parallel to the road. East of the road, the woods are a light forest (reduce the chance of encountering the patrol to only 25%). West of the road, the woods are a moderate forest (reduce the chance of encountering the patrol to only 15%). Close to the foot of Yvvivor, the woods are a heavy forest (reduce the chance of encountering the patrol to only 5%). The marching rate will depend on the current condition of the PCs and the area through which they choose to travel.

When the PCs begin to curve around north of Yvvivor (DM's discretion on exactly when that is), roll for encountering the second patrol that the duke keeps in the area. Use the same statistics and encounter chances as for the earlier patrol.

6. The Half-Elf. When the PCs make their next night's camp, they encounter the half-elf mage/thief Elamurix.

Shortly before dark, Elamurix approaches the PCs' camp, giving plenty of warning of his approach. Keeping to half-truths so that a *detect truth* spell won't catch him in an open lie, he claims to be exactly what he is, a treasure-hunter come to find the last stronghold of Clan Yvvivor, which he's learned about through ancient writings (a half-truth). He offers to accompany the PCs, to give them the benefit of his knowledge and his skill, and to split any proceeds with them (true—providing he gets what he wants).

He won't tell the PCs he's been watching them through a *crystal ball* for two days, and he certainly won't voluntarily touch the *Book of Blood* under any circumstances, although clever PCs might find a way to trick him into touching it, to tie his fate to theirs. If Elamurix touches the book, he is attacked at noon of the following day by a single wrath, and the sequence of the curse begins afresh for him.

Other than this, Elamurix knows a great deal that he'll reveal gradually in order to gain the PCs' confidence. He knows what the Focuses are, and that the gods conceal them from mortals (what use is divine power if mortals can manufacture items with equal powers?). Even "evil" gods like the Nordic Loki and the Egyptian Set abide by the policy of keeping the Focuses a strict secret. The Focus of Eryhil'n, however, was discovered by ancient humans who built a Stonehenge-like monument around it and raised a temple on the mountain overlooking it. Later, the dwarves annihilated those humans, and the Citadel of Raphgadarn was constructed near the temple.

Elamurix also knows that the dwarves attempted to use the Focus for the creation of magical items. After a period of initial success, the power of the Focus proved uncontrollable and the citadel and Clan Yvvivor were destroyed in a violent explosion some 300 years ago. At that time, two dwarves of the clan were absent. They were Deghnaror, Raphgadarn's son, who returned to Yvvivor and inscribed the fourth side of the obelisk, and Nagathorn, an emissary to Raphgadarn's human customers. Nagathorn is Duke Karl's prisoner (see area 7).

Elamurix keeps secret the fact that he met Deghnaror by chance. Over a period of years, he made a point of becoming the dwarf's "friend" and slowly drew the story of Yvvivor out of him. Elamurix intended to bring Deghnaror to Yvvivor, to help in ferreting out the secrets of the Focus. But Deghnaror was elderly and in poor health. He died before the journey could begin, but not before telling Elamurix that three dwarven weaponsmiths were trapped at the Focus when the disaster occurred, and that one of the weaponsmiths carried a marvelous magical item that may yet survive. This item is what Elamurix wants for himself (see "The Three Dwarves").

Elamurix therefore came to Yvvivor alone. In the course of the journey, he happened to meet one of the bearers of the *Book of Blood* (but avoided being caught by the curse himself), and thus has first-hand knowledge of what happens to someone beset by the curse. But he also learned how important the book might be in unraveling the secrets of the Focus, since the book was created from the knowledge of the only two powerful mages who ever managed to penetrate those secrets. For that reason he has kept the book under observation.

If the PCs permit Elamurix to join them, he'll be a loyal and valuable member of the party. He knows about the hazards of the Vale and will avoid personal danger as much as possible. He will help the PCs as much as he can, but he won't run great risks on their behalf and will be prepared to abandon them should their presence prove contrary to his self-interest.

If the PCs refuse to let Elamurix go with them, he'll accept the rebuff with apparent good grace. He'll follow them at a distance, keeping track of them with his *crystal ball*.

Elamurix, half-elf: AL CN; AC −1; MV 12; T12/M7; hp 60; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 12, D 18, C 16, I 18, W 10, Ch 10; ML 15; XP 9,000; dagger, short sword.

Proficiencies: sling, dagger, blind fighting (others chosen by DM).

Thief skills: PP 50%, OL 75%, FT 65%, MS 70%, HS 70%, DN 60%, CW 90%, RL 65%; backstab: +4 to-hit modi-

fier, ×4 damage multiplier.

Spells: *burning hands, charm person*, dancing lights, detect magic*, feather fall*, friends, magic missile*, read magic, sleep, darkness 15' radius, detect invisibility*, forget, knock*, know alignment*, locate object, misdirection, clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic*, fireball, hold person*, suggestion, charm monster, confusion*, dimension door.* (Spells marked with an asterisk are currently memorized; the rest are in his spell book. The DM should add to or delete from these spells to suit his adventure's needs).

Magical Weapons and Items: *bracers of defense AC 3, boots of elvenkind, sling of seeking +2,* potion of *extra-healing,* potions of *healing* (×3), *crystal ball.* Elamurix has been using this ball to keep track of the *Book of Blood*, and of the PCs, ever since the PCs discovered the tome. Since the *crystal ball* is used by Elamurix to scry the book and its vicinity rather than the party or any of its members, any chance the PCs may have to detect the scrying through spells or devices should be reduced by 90%.

The Blank Page

When the PCs round the tip of Mount Yvvivor and come in sight of the castle, writing appears on the blank page in the center of the *Book of Blood.* The DM should use his own discretion in deciding exactly when this occurs.

If the PCs have forgotten about the blank page, and if Elamurix is with the PCs, the DM may use the half-elf to remind the PCs to look at the center page of the book. If the PCs have forgotten, and if Elamurix is not with the party, the PCs have a serious problem.

Here's what the formerly blank page now says:

> When the Ancient Ones found the door to the Focus, they erected their sacred stones and prayed to their god (whose name is forgotten). In time, it was revealed to them the truth of the Focus and the means for approaching it.
>
> Know this, then: When you have finished an item and are prepared to cast upon it the enchant an item spell, do not cast that spell but merely take the item to the Focus and it will be as if that spell had been cast. When you have enchanted an item with the spells required to create the effect you desire and are ready to cast the permanency spell upon it, do not cast that spell but merely take the item to the Focus and it will be as if that spell had been cast.
>
> But beware lest you perish. You must follow the steps required when you approach the Focus. New magic is not possible so close to the Focus of magic; only that already contained within magical items such as this book will serve you.
>
> All this was known to the Ancient Ones. All this was learned by the dwarves of Yvvivor, who then slew the Ancient Ones to retain the secret for themselves. Yet the dwarves paid the price for their greed and arrogance, for they sought to channel the power of the Focus itself to their forges. The power they tapped was too great, and it slew them in turn, for it gushed forth in strength beyond mortal ken.
>
> Read this and learn, and beware.
>
> I write these words in my Book of Blood that all posterity may know that I speak the truth.
>
> Here, then, are the instructions given to the Ancient Ones by their god, as modified by the author of this book:
>
> 1. The Focus operates only on the five primary days of the full moon: the two days before the fullness, the day of fullness, and the two days after.
> 2. Go to the dwarven castle overlooking the Vale of Yvvivor, to the temple behind the castle, and there cast the succor spell.
> 3. On the days named, go into the Vale and stand motionless before the floating door until the name appears, then speak the name.
> 4. Enter the corridor.
> 5. While in the corridor, cast the hold portal spell.
> 6. Cast the gate spell.
> 7. Approach the red light to create magical items.
> 8. Approach the black light to destroy magical items.
> 9. Touch the one who activates the succor spell or be left behind.
>
> By the hand of Agrackan Akarias.

At this point, the PCs should know to go next to the temple on Mt. Yvvivor, located behind the ruined dwarven castle (see area 7 and "The Temple"). However, if the PCs decide to go directly to the Focus, the sword will guide them to area 8 (see "The Vale of Yvvivor").

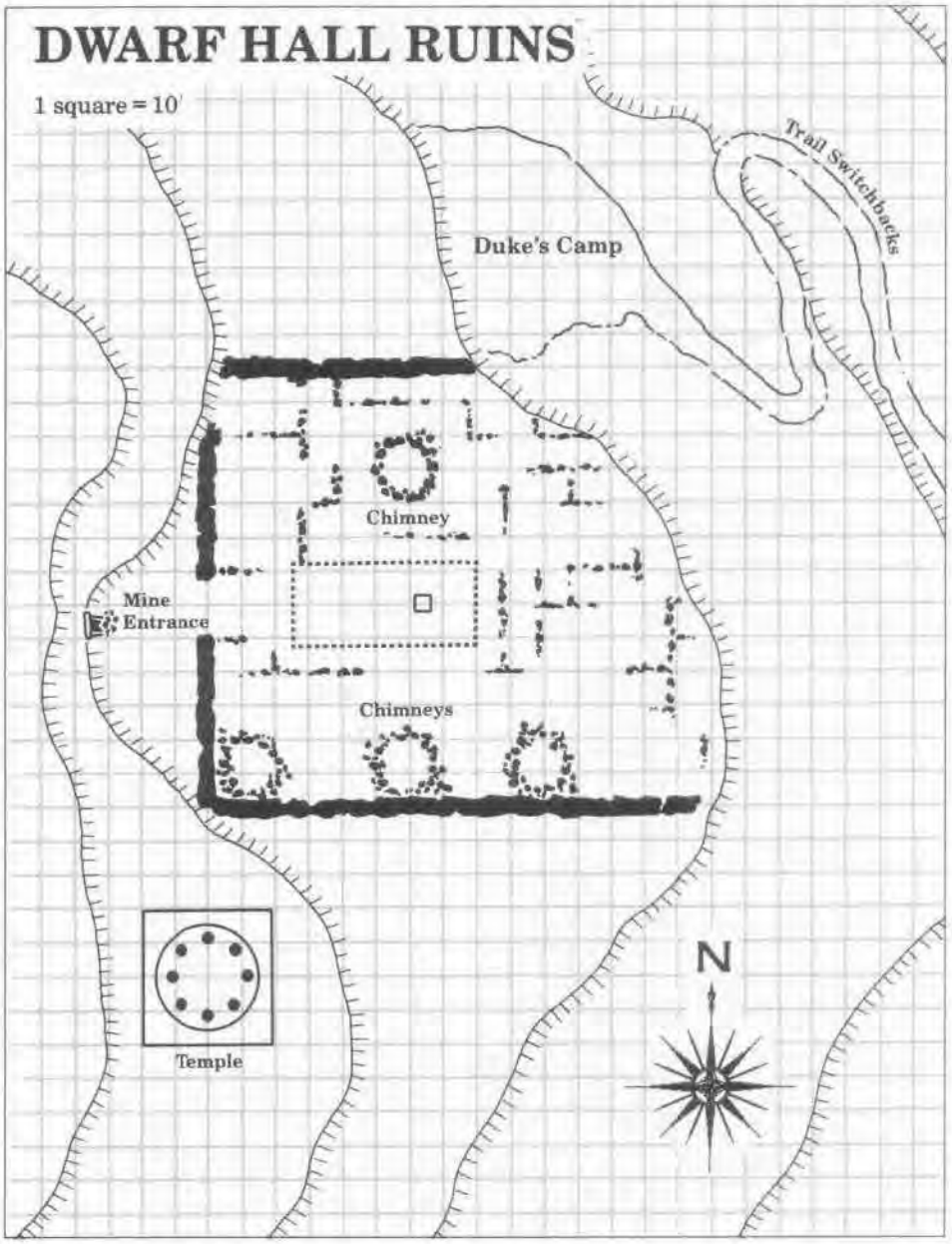
7. The Duke's Camp. The easiest way to reach the ruined castle is to continue to follow the old road, which climbs the eastern side of Mt. Yvvivor using a series of steep switchbacks (use one-quarter standard road movement rate when climbing the switchbacks). Since the duke's patrols use this route regularly, the PCs will notice unmistakable signs of heavy traffic along this route. However, the duke has two sentries always on watch at the top of the switchbacks. During the day, the sentries are virtually certain to see anyone climbing the switchbacks. At night during the full moon, there is only a 50% chance that someone climbing the switchbacks will be detected.

The safest way to reach the ruined castle is to climb the side of Mt. Yvvivor, which is scalable on the east (when climbing the steep slopes, use the "steep foothills" rate from page 125 of the *DMG).* The slopes are forested, and there is little chance of the PCs being detected if they approach in this manner. (At the DM's option, the Forest Random Encounters table may continue to be used until the PCs actually reach the duke's camp.)

When the PCs arrive at the camp, read the following to the players:

> An expeditionary camp is set within the ruins of the old dwarven citadel that was constructed near the ancient temple. These ruins are a scene of complete destruction. Shattered as if by an immense explosion, the stubs of four forge chimneys jut above piles of rubble. Only parts of three walls remain to be seen; the east side of this "palace," where the dwarven king had his great hall, has tumbled down the mountain and nothing remains of it. West of the main ruins is the caved-in head of a mine shaft.

On the east slope, below the old hall, the road comes up the mountain in a series of hair-pin switchbacks to give limited access. At the top of the switchbacks, 12 wagons are lined up in two rows, with 20 tents (including a double tent with a guarded coach parked next to it) pitched in haphazard fashion just south of the wagons. Some men have tossed their blankets under the wagons rather than sleep in tents. The horse lines are on the south side of the camp near the old road entrance. There has been no attempt at camp discipline, and latrines have been dug among the jumbled hillocks above the old palace hall.



This is Duke Karl's camp. His party consists of three personal servants, five bodyguards, six officers, 50 troopers, and 20 teamster/porters (who do most of the camp work). The bodyguards, servants, laborers, three officers and at least 25 troopers are always in camp. Two of the troopers are on watch at the top of the switchbacks. Any officers and troopers not currently in the camp are out on patrol or hunting (the duke feels no need to patrol the Vale, since he believes there's nothing important there). Assume that one patrol consisting of an officer and five troopers is out at any one time (as per the patrol described in area 4). Subtract any soldiers encountered on patrols from the totals given for soldiers in the camp, given in the following paragraphs.

Parked near the duke's double tent is his personal coach, which is unlocked but always guarded by two sentries. Within it are the duke's personal belongings and his treasury (which he always keeps under his direct control because he doesn't trust anyone). The three small treasure chests contain 2,000 gp and 4,000 sp (each chest holds 2,000 coins of one type).

Even though the duke is looking for magical weapons, he doesn't trust wizards and has none with him. Instead, he owns a marvelous long-haired, tan-colored cat named Prince. It's said that a long-dead, incredibly powerful mage found a way to cast the spells *detect evil* and *detect magic* with *permanency* on this cat and then fed him a potion of *longevity* so enhanced that the cat is virtually immortal. Prince meows distinctively when he detects either magic or evil (in intent, not in alignment) in both persons and items. *He* may know whether he has detected evil or magic, but his meow does not distinguish between them. The duke traded a strategic fortress to obtain Prince.

Also in the camp is Nagathorn, a very old dwarf, who is chained by the neck to the central pole of Duke Karl's tent. Nagathorn is feigning loss of memory about the magical weapons of Yvvivor. This isn't difficult because, as far as he knows, there aren't any magical weapons left at the ancient dwarven site.

If the PCs are captured, the duke won't spend much time with them. Shortly after the duke begins the interrogation, one of his soldiers bursts in to report that the laborers have just stumbled on a trapdoor in the center of the ruins. It leads, by carved stone stairs, down into darkness. The duke immediately goes to investigate, telling an officer to have the PCs securely bound and placed under guard.

The trapdoor leads to an underground storage space for completed but not-yet-magical weapons. There are 50 spears made of a gleaming, steel-like alloy, 15 crossbows made of the same material,

20 two-handed swords, and 300 metal bolts for the crossbows. All these are finely made but lack wood or leather grips. All were meant for human use and are so well made that when the perishable parts are properly replaced (a competent weaponsmith is required), they will each have a nonmagical +1 to hit.

Duke Karl of Charthur: AL LE; AC 0; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 11, D 9, C 10, I 14, W 8, Ch 13; ML 7 (commands but avoids combat); XP 65. The duke wears ornate and impressive full plate armor that has been badly weakened with deeply inlaid gold on an old ivory surface (AC 3). He carries two daggers but tends to avoid combat, letting his minions deal with threats. He always carries a pouch of assorted gems (two gems worth 1,000 gp each, 15 worth 500-800 each). He also has a *ring of protection +3*, a *ring of human influence*, and one vial each of the following potions: *extra-healing, vitality, treasure finding* (the duke distrusts the identity of this potion). He never lets these magical items leave his person. The duke is clever but egotistical; he likes flattery, but years of court intrigue have taught him never to let his guard down, and at least one bodyguard will always be close to him.

Nagathorn: AL N; AC 10 (under a heavy cloak, nearly naked); MV 6; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 7, C 14, I 10, W 11, Ch 8; ML 8. Nagathorn's dominant emotion is fear of the duke. He will cooperate with anyone who offers to free him but will not willingly risk the duke's wrath by protecting or aiding the duke's enemies. If Nagathorn gets free and things start going badly, he'll bail out at the first available moment.

Prince: Int animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 5; HD 1−1; hp 7; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1; SA rear claws for 1-2; SD gains +2 to surprise and +1 to be surprised; SZ T; XP 15; MC (Mammal, small, house cat; note that this entry and the one for "wild cat" are incorrect in MC, so see also MM2, "Cat").

Officers (6 total): AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; F3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 65; lance, short sword, dagger, shield; treasure type M.

Troopers (50 total): AL N; AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 5-8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; XP 15; lances, short swords, daggers, shields; treasure type K.

Bodyguards (5 total): AL LN; AC 5; MV 12; F4; hp 15-35; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 15; XP 175; hand axes, short swords, daggers, shields, treasure type M.

Servants (3) and **Laborers** (20): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 1-5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 7; XP 7; knives, treasure type J.

Horses, medium (61; two per wagon, one each for duke, bodyguards, officers, and half of troopers): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SZ L; ML 6; XP 65; MC.

Magical Effects of the Focus

If the PCs travel south into the Vale of Yvvivor, they will enter a zone where proximity to the Focus interferes with the use of magic.

Within a half-mile radius of the Focus (within the hex it occupies), the power of the Focus floods the mind of a wizard or cleric with such strong magical impressions that fresh magical spells (from the mind or from scrolls) cannot be cast. Only previously cast spells (e.g., those in magical items) can be used within this radius of the Focus. "Natural" magic (e.g., a druid's ability to change shape) is unaffected.

Within a 1½-mile radius of the Focus (the hex occupied by the Focus and the six hexes adjacent to it), the power of the Focus makes the use of magic haphazard. In this zone, any freshly cast magical spell has a 50% chance of failing to work. (The DM, at his own discretion, may choose to allow a "failed" spell to work but tamper with its effects.)

The Temple

When the PCs approach the temple beyond the dwarven citadel, read the following to the players:

> South of the ruined castle, a little to the west and on a slightly higher level, stand the ruins of an ancient temple. A largely intact square foundation supports a circular stand of now-shattered stone columns. The remnants of the roof lie in piles of rubble between the column bases. In the very center is a circular depression from which the majority of the rubble appears to have been cleared at some time in the past.
>
> Below the temple, the eastern flank of Mt. Yvvivor slope steeply (but in scalable stages) down toward the forested floor of the valley.

The temple is still a holy place despite its ruined condition. If a *succor* spell (from the *Book of Blood*) is cast here, it will bring the PCs back to the temple when it is activated. Other than this residual holiness, there is nothing special about the temple.

Once the PCs have visited the temple and cast their *succor* spell (see "The Blank Page"), they should make their way into the Vale. The *Sword of Lamnian* will continue to point them toward the Focus. If the duke knows of the adventurers' presence, he will pursue them with half his immediately available forces (leaving the rest to guard his camp).

The Vale of Yvvivor

> The Vale of Yvvivor is a heavily forested, glacier-carved valley between two mountain peaks. The only easy access is via the old road that comes down from the north. On the south, the Vale is enclosed by a high, rugged arm of Mt. Yvvivor, which reaches around to join with the equally forbidding mountain on the east of the Vale. Between these two mountains is a drainage basin with a overgrown, nearly stagnant lake in its center. On the north side, a small but swift stream carries away the overflow of the lake and curves away north and west to join the river on Yvvivor's western side.

As long as the PCs stay on the road, they run no risk of random encounters. As soon as they enter the forest, however, the Vale Random Encounters table is used. The DM can continue to use the Vale Random Encounters table in the swamp, since it is liberally dotted with small islands.

8. The Swamp and the Island. When the PCs reach the border of the swamp, read the following to the players:

> One mile (one hex) from the lowest contour of Mt. Yvvivor is the edge of

Vale Random Encounters

Roll 1d12 for each hex the PCs enter (and don't forget the shimmering wraths!). If the PCs attempt to avoid an encounter generated by this table, in all cases they have a 15% chance of getting lost for 1d10+2 turns (−1% per level of any ranger or druid with the party, cumulative), after which they regain their line of march. The *Sword of Lamnian* will always point toward the Focus, of course, but if the PCs are lost, the sword is assumed to be pointing into impassable terrain (thickets, deep ravines, quicksand, etc.).

1. **Giant mantis** (1): Int non; AL N; AC 3; MV 6, fly 12 (D); HD 10; THAC0 11; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2-12 or 3-12; SA 75% chance to surprise; SD camouflage; SZ L; XP 1,980; MM2/83. The mantis is lying in wait for suitable prey, and there is a 75% chance it will recognize that the PCs are too dangerous and not attack. In that case, the PCs have a 25% chance to detect the mantis as they pass it (+1% per level of any ranger or druid with the party, cumulative).

2. **Wild tiger** (1-4): Int semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-10; SA rear claws 2-8 each; SD surprised only on a 1; SZ L; ML 9; XP 650; MC. These tigers are hunting for prey but have fed recently and are not desperate enough to attack a resolute defense, particularly if the PCs have any pole arms. If their first attack does not yield immediate results, the tigers harass the PCs for 1-6 turns and then go hunting elsewhere. If a tiger receives more than 30% damage, however, it becomes enraged and attacks furiously until killed. The other tigers watch all the while for any chance to seize and drag away prey.

3. **Giant wasps** (1-20): Int non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, fly 21 (B); HD 4; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-4; SA poison and paralysis; SZ M; ML 9; XP 420; MC. The PCs have discovered a huge wasp hive, with a 30% chance (−1%/level of any ranger or druid with the party, cumulative) of disturbing the wasps. If the wasps are disturbed, they attack resolutely until the PCs are at least 50 yards from the hive, after which the giant insects discontinue the attack. If the PCs return, the wasps attack again immediately.

4. **Giant porcupine** (2): Int animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 6; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA shoot quills; SD quills; SZ L; ML 10; XP 650; MC. These porcupines are feasting in the middle of the trail and have no intention of being driven off (treat their morale as 10 for this encounter, on the assumption they've discovered a particularly delectable treat of some kind). If the PCs come within 30', the porcupines give a warning for one round before attacking. They will vacate the trail only if they fail a morale check.

5. **Giant skunk** (1): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD 5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA, SD squirt musk; SZ M; ML 9; XP 270; MC. When the PCs discover this skunk, it is already angry as a result of a previous encounter with a larger predator. The PCs have a 30% chance (+1% per level of any ranger or druid with the party, cumulative) of detecting the skunk before it detects them. If they fail, the skunk attacks (musk squirt) one round after it detects them, unless they retreat first (roll for initiative).

6. **Megalo-centipede** (1d4+1): Int animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 18; HD 3; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison; SZ M; ML 9; XP 175; MC. Just ahead on the trail, the PCs see a deer being attacked by one megalo-centipede. The adventurers have one round in which to check for other megalo-centipedes in the trees above (50% chance, +1% per level for any ranger or druid with the party). In the following round, the megalo-centipedes attack from above.

7. **Wolves** (2-20): Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ S; ML 10; XP 65; MC. A wounded stag, closely pursued by the wolves, bursts across the trail amid the party. The PCs have a 5% chance per level of any ranger or druid (cumulative) of detecting the event before it occurs, with 1-6 rounds of warning. The wolves arrive one round after the stag and will attack any PCs in their path.

8. **Will o'wisp** (1-3): Int exceptional; AL CE; AC −8; MV fly 18 (A); HD 9; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA electrical attack, masquerade as artificial light; SD effective invisibility; MR most magic ineffective; SZ S; ML 17; XP 3,000; MC. The PCs may mistake these for shimmering wraths, depending on how the DM presents them.

9. **Mantrap** (1-2): Int non; AL N; AC 6; MV nil; HD 4-9; THAC0 nil; #AT 2-5; Dmg 1 hp per round; SA fascination; SZ L-G (4' per HD); ML 12; XP 270-2,000; MC. If this encounter occurs during the day, the PCs have a 5% chance per level of any ranger or druid (cumulative) to recognize the plant's odor before anyone can be charmed. If the encounter occurs during the night, treat as "no encounter."

10. **Stirges** (3d8): Int animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1 (attack as 4-HD creatures); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA blood drain; SZ S (2' wingspan); ML 8; XP 175; MC. Small colonies of stirges breed in the swamp and fly about in small clouds. Because of their distinctive sound, the PCs will have 1d6+2 rounds warning of their approach.

11: No encounter.

12: No encounter.

a shallow, cold-water, high-mountain lake that is so clogged with vegetation, sand bars, and ridges of rock that it's virtually a swamp. The water of the swamp is knee high to a human, so that walking through it presents little difficulty. The *Sword of Lamnian* continues to point to the middle of the swamp.

The *Sword of Lamnian* points to the top of a low hill in the center of a large island in the middle of the swamp. If the PCs reached this spot from two days before the full moon to two days after the full moon, and climb to the top of the hill, read the following to the players:

On the top of the hill is a circle of 12 great dark stones, each 15′ from base to crown. Three of the stones are still standing, but the others have fallen outward from the center as though toppled by a great explosion.

In the center of the circle is a spot of bare ground 10′ in diameter where no vegetation grows. Floating 6″ above this barren ground is an 8′-high door frame whose lower edge appears to taper into nothingness.

NOTE: If the PCs have not reached the Focus within the specified span of days, the door cannot be seen and there is nothing anyone can do to make it appear. The PCs will have no way to reach the Focus or to destroy the book until the next full moon.

The doorway is intangible; looking through it is like looking through a window. Any being who steps through the opening will notice no special sensation and will produce no results.

However, if anyone stands motionless before the doorway for one round, he sees a word in his native language forming above the doorway: Eryhil'n, the name of the Focus.

If the PC who sees the name pronounces it, read the following to the players:

A long, blank-walled corridor appears before you. It appears to stretch away from you for 100′, and at its end is another doorway filled with gray mist.

If a PC steps into the corridor, he can walk unhindered to the far doorway—but the moment he steps through that doorway, he finds that he's exiting exactly where he entered just a few moments before.

The Focus

The shimmering wraths will continue to attack the PCs on schedule, even when the adventurers have entered the corridor—and even when they've reached the Focus.

Any person who enters the corridor has an odd and unsettling visual sensation, as though the corridor and its single door were constantly moving in and out of reality. The only way to get beyond the simple one-door corridor is to step into the corridor and cast a *hold portal* spell from a magical item or from the *Book of Blood*. When the spell is cast, the "in and out of reality" sensation stops and the single door disappears. The corridor now appears to go on forever with no end in sight.

The corridor has become a möbius strip, and anyone in the corridor at this time is now walking along that strip. No matter how far in either direction the PCs walk along this corridor, they will never come to its end.

The DM will find it easiest to explain this situation to his players if he actually makes a möbius strip for demonstration. Simply take a long strip of paper, make a single half-turn in the strip, and fasten the two ends together. You now have a one-sided strip of paper with one edge and no end. You can prove this by drawing a line down the middle of the strip. The line will return to its starting point after traversing the entire strip.

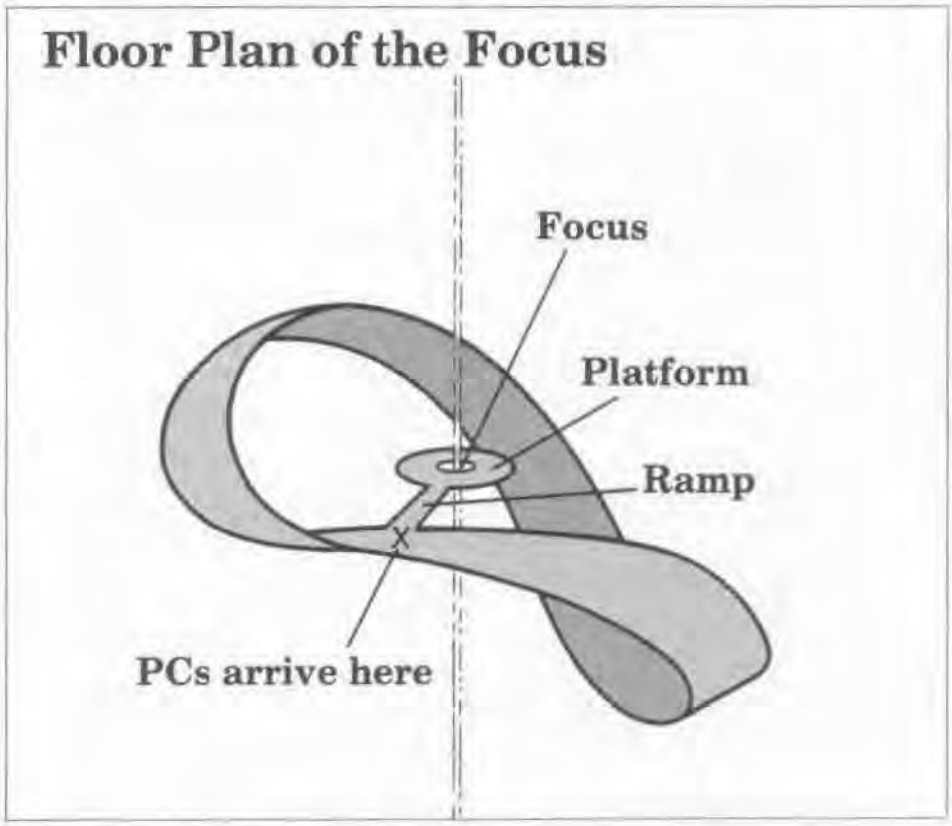
Once they are in the doorless corridor, the PCs can reach the Focus by casting a *gate* spell (from a magical item or from the *Book of Blood*). No destination need be named; any *gate* spell cast in the doorless corridor will take the PCs to the Focus, no matter what destination is specified.

When the PCs have cast the *gate* spell, refer to the floor plan of the Focus and read the following to the players:

You find yourselves in the midst of what appears to be a great void, standing on a ring-shaped platform that surrounds a sparkling pillar of red light. At the opposite side of the

ring, the platform makes a dizzying half-twist that would make it into a second möbius strip except for the ramp directly before you that leads to the pillar of light. At the far end of the ramp, a 20'-wide walkway actually surrounds the pillar of light.

Lying at the intersection of the ramp and the platform are the bodies of three dwarves dressed in fine linen tunics, with woolen trousers and ornate leather boots.



The pillar of light is the Focus itself. Seen from where the PCs are first standing, the pillar is bright red though the light is not offensive to the eyes no matter how close the PCs come to it. The Focus is approached from this position for the creation of magical items.

To destroy magical items, however, the PCs must walk around the platform, traverse the half-twist, and return to the ramp directly "below" where they first stood. Seen from this position, the pillar of light is a glowing black in color. The Focus is approached from this position for the destruction of magical items.

Any item placed in the pillar of light (either the red or black side) floats in mid-air as long as it is left undisturbed. Within the Focus there is no gravity nor any temperature. If any PC puts his hand into the Focus, he does not notice any sensation at all; the power of the Focus has no effect on living tissue.

In order to destroy a magical item, a key phrase must always be spoken. If the PCs have been paying attention, they know the word that will cause the Focus to destroy the *Book of Blood* (see "The Dream").

The Three Dwarves

The three dwarves' bodies have apparently been mummified by long exposure to the Focus, but their clothes are much the worse for the passage of time. Their belts have deteriorated and their purses are in shreds, but in the remnants of the purses are 16 gp and two gems (1,000 gp and 2,100 gp), 24 gp and one gem (3,100 gp), and 40 gp and two gems (1,200 gp and 2,200 gp). All three dwarves wear ordinary daggers with no magical value. The DM may rule that some or all of the gems have received the effects of an *enchant an item* spell due to their long exposure to the Focus—they can be presumed to be pure items (see pages 87-88 of the *DMG*), while the coins and daggers are not and should not be given any magical value.

On the hand of one dwarf is a *ring of protection from charm poisons* (see scroll of *protection from poison* for effects; duration is for as long as the ring is worn). This ring is specifically designed to counteract the effects of the mantrap plant.

Around the neck of one dwarf, on a silver chain, is an *amulet of protection against stirges* that will prevent stirges from coming closer than 30' to the wearer.

In the hand of one dwarf is a *dwarven throwing hammer* +2. Beside him is a dwarf-sized *shield of fire resistance* +2 (as the potion) with twice normal resistance against the breath of a red dragon.

On the floor near the dwarf with the amulet is a magical *ring of longevity*. This is the item that Elamurix has come for. A diamond is mounted on it, in which the name "Phoenix" (in dwarven runes) is engraved. For every day the ring is worn, the wearer experiences only one hour's aging.

However, unknown to Elamurix, the ring has a side effect: For every day it's worn, the wearer loses a portion of his ability to feel emotions. After a thousand days, the wearer is unable to feel any emotions at all—neither desire nor fear nor love nor hate, nor any interest in adventure or knowledge or treasure.

The effect is enduring, so that even after the ring is removed the loss of emotion remains. If the ring is removed, however, the effect can be reversed by casting one *dispel magic* spell for every 50 days the ring was actually worn. If the ring was worn the full thousand days, it would require 20 *dispel magic* spells to completely reverse the effects and to restore full emotional capacity.

The primary value of this ring is to a high-level wizard, who could use it to counteract the aging effects of major spells. A secondary value is to make the wearer immune to *fear* and emotion-based spells to the same degree that his emotions have been numbed by the ring (for example, if the ring has been worn for 500 days, the wearer would have 50% immunity but also would be 50% unlikely to have any interest in treasure or adventuring).

The dwarves had enchanted the *ring of longevity* and had brought it to the

Focus to make the enchantments permanent (which has happened during the intervening time, of course) when the disaster struck: Clan Yvvivor was destroyed, and during the catastrophe the vital *succor* spell that would have rescued these three dwarves was lost. Since the only way for anyone to leave the Focus is by activating a *succor* spell, and since the spell has to be cast before entering the möbius corridor, anyone who fails to take that precaution will be permanently trapped at the Focus. The three dwarves were trapped here and starved to death because no one came to rescue them.

If Elamurix is still with the PCs, he will do anything necessary in order to get the *ring of longevity*. If the PCs are willing to let him have it, he will continue to be a loyal member of the party. But if they refuse to let him have it, he'll attempt to steal the ring and the *succor* spell object while the PCs are concentrating on destroying the book, and will attempt to activate the *succor* spell by himself (leaving the PCs to starve at the Focus).

Concluding the Adventure

Before destroying the *Book of Blood*, the PCs should remember to remove the medallion from the cover if they want to keep the *Sword of Lamnian*. If they forget to do this, the medallion will be destroyed with the book.

In order to destroy the *Book of Blood* and thus rid themselves of the *curse of the shimmering wrath* (and complete the *quest* Lamnian has put upon them), the PCs must follow the instructions Lamnian gave them in the dream and the instructions given on the blank page in the book.

The PCs should approach the black-light form of the Focus, lay the book within the Focus, and pronounce Agrackan's name backward: "Nakcarga!" Placing the book within the red-light form of the Focus has no effect at all.

The moment that it enters the black light, the book vanishes and the PCs are instantly freed of the *curse of the shimmering wrath*. If any wraths are in the process of attacking at that moment, they immediately cease attacking and begin to fade, vanishing within one round.

Remember, however, that the curse is now placed upon the precincts of the Focus, and anyone who comes to the Focus after the PCs leave will suffer the consequences of the curse (see "The Dream").

When the PC who holds the *succor* spell object activates it, the spell transports him and anyone touching him back to the temple behind the ruined dwarven castle on the slopes of Mt. Yvvivor.

If the PCs fail to follow Lamnian's instructions on how to destroy the *Book of Blood* in the Focus, the shimmering wraths will continue to attack them until the PCs are destroyed.

If the PCs have failed to provide themselves with a *succor* spell to rescue them from the Focus (or if the spell is misused or stolen), they will remain there until they starve (or until someone comes to rescue them, if anyone has the interest and ability to do so).

If the PCs destroy the *Book of Blood* and succeed in returning to the temple, they must make their own way down off the mountain and out of Duke Karl's clutches (if he's still alive). The difficulties they face in doing this will depend on the situation they left behind them when they entered the Focus.

Since no one actually hired the PCs to undertake this mission, no one's going to reward them for succeeding. However, between the *Sword of Lamnian* and the loot taken from the corpses of the three dwarves at the Focus (if nothing else), the PCs should receive adequate compensation for their troubles. They should also be thankful to be alive and should keep this adventure in mind the next time they're tempted to examine the belongings of some strange skeleton. Ω

Continued from page 39

A few feet away from the ettercap's shelter are the giant spider's webs. The remains of several birds and insects are still stuck in the strands. Also stuck here is the body of a recently killed giant dragonfly, the skin of which is worth 600 gp per square foot (this is a small specimen, yielding only four square feet of skin).

Snarrak, the spriggan, must remain in small form while in his lair in the opposite tree, for none of the platforms are strong enough to support his giant form. Snarrak's treehouse is the same size as the ettercap's. It is spacious enough when he is gnome size, in spite of the fact he is a terrible housekeeper. The dusty, dingy blankets on which he sleeps haven't been washed in years, and they reek of spriggan perspiration. However, Snarrak never brings food into this area, so the little house doesn't smell nearly as rank as the ettercap's shelter. A rope ladder made of ettercap strands connects the spriggan's tree with the ettercap's.

In the corner of Snarrak's house nearest the ladder is a locked strongbox containing 65 gp, 24 sp, 19 cp, a garnet worth 100 gp, a gold ring worth 75 gp, a set of earrings worth 50 gp, a scroll with the wizard spell *enlarge*, and a set of thief's tools. A human-size set of *leather armor +2* is hidden under the blankets.

Concluding the Encounter

The ettercap and the giant spider fight until slain or until all PCs have been trapped, killed, or driven away. This is, after all, their home, and they have no place to flee. Snarrak, on the other hand, won't fight so valiantly. If he is reduced to fewer than 10 hp, or if the encounter seems to be going badly for him, he flees into the woods at the first opportunity. Ω

Jay Ouzts has just started law school at Tulane University, where he won't have much time for role-playing games.

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Continued from page 15

because it is a great source of *cheap* adventures. It also prints only these, whereas DRAGON® Magazine prints occasional modules for any RPG and plenty of gaming articles for all RPGs.

If you want to print modules for other RPGs, expand the length of your magazine, use the same strict guidelines and tough reviewing, and find some way to lower the cover price. Even if these things are done, I would still be against modules for non-D&D/AD&D games, but at least I would know you hadn't been pressured into publishing modules for other games and using up potential D&D/AD&D module space when you don't have enough room to publish all the modules you currently receive for those games.

Allan J. Cleaveland
Fayetteville, Arkansas

I'd like to clear up two misconceptions in Allan's letter. DRAGON Magazine no longer publishes any RPG adventure modules, only the occasional stand-alone board game. Also, we aren't overflowing with D&D and AD&D modules just waiting to be published. We have enough mid-level AD&D adventures for several issues, but it's always a scramble to fill those issues with a well-balanced mix of adventures. We could use more low-level and high-level adventures.

None of our writers are employees of TSR. Their work is judged by the same standards we use for everyone (ask Willie Walsh how many of his proposals I've rejected!). The best way to fill up DUNGEON Magazine with the types of adventures you like is to send them in.

First, I would like to express my delight at the continuing overall excellent quality of your publication. "Jo" Philagios's comment in issue 25 concerning the expansion of her campaign world certainly applies to mine as well. I also am thankful for the second index, as flipping through my well-thumbed stack of DUNGEON Magazines in a search for inspiration is quite time-consuming (though very interesting).

I do have a complaint concerning the experimental MARVEL SUPER HEROES game adventure. That is, **end the experiment.** I understand that you guys are trying to serve the paying public as best you can, but I thought the general idea was that DUNGEON Adventures would serve the D&D-related worlds, not their comic-book cousins. I liked "Hellfire Hostages" even less than those ghastly solo modules, which at least were still set in a D&D-type multiverse. The magazine is doing fine as it is, and whatever "newer world" you set out to find, I hope it can still be reached by a *teleport* spell.

Also, what's with the plastic wrappers? Are they biodegradable? I can bear the brown wrappers if it helps the environment.

Daniel Cordes
Little Neck, New York

We've had years of problems with the "plain brown wrappers" that were used to mail out both DUNGEON Adventures and DRAGON Magazine. They didn't protect the magazines at all, and were frequently delivered without the magazine inside! The plastic wrappers aren't biodegradable but they may be recyclable, depending on the area you live in.

I want to commend you on deciding to allow other TSR game adventures to be printed. I cannot wait to run your Marvel adventure, "Hellfire Hostages" (issue #25). I really hope this means you will be printing more adventures for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. I would also like to see some adventures for the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game system. I enjoy playing these other games as well as the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, and it is hard to constantly create new adventures for my players. Please print my address so I can talk to other fans of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game.

Shawn Welker
1630 S. Gabriel River Cir.
Sugarland, Texas 77478

I've been a subscriber to DUNGEON Adventures since its inception and have always appreciated its continually excellent level of resource material for the D&D and AD&D games. This is what I understood the magazine to be when I originally subscribed to it, and this is why I maintain my subscription.

Then your staff decided to broaden the scope of the magazine to include other TSR games, devoting a large portion of your limited page space to an adventure for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game. This would be fine, except that it detracts from the space available for the D&D and AD&D material, the reason I subscribe to DUNGEON Adventures.

While this may be addressing the needs of some of the more vocal readers, I for one feel betrayed. I subscribed to a magazine promoting itself to be a collection of adventures solely for the D&D and AD&D games. Now, having recently renewed my subscription, I feel I'm stuck having bought a year's worth of magazine that I'm not sure I really want anymore.

Perhaps the majority of the readers do want material for other TSR games. If this is the case, I'll concede that I'm in the minority and bow out gracefully. If, however, the majority of the readers want a magazine covering the same material it was supposed to cover, I trust you'll revert to the original format.

Roger Trout
Portland, Maine

As a faithful reader of DUNGEON Magazine, I was appalled when I opened the September/October 1990 issue to find a MARVEL SUPER HEROES adventure inside.

I do not feel that MARVEL SUPER HEROES adventures are in sync with the nature or character of DUNGEON Magazine. If I want a Marvel adventure, I will read a Marvel comic.

Please do not include another adventure of that nature in DUNGEON Magazine, as it would seriously detract from my enjoyment of the magazine.

Gunnar Swanson
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

This is only a representative sampling of the feedback we've received on issue #25's MARVEL SUPER HEROES adventure. Part Two of the experiment is the TOP SECRET/S.I. adventure, "Operation: Fire Sale," in this issue. I expect we'll get even more letters during the next month or so.

Please be assured that every letter is read by both the editor and the publisher (heck, we don't even have a secretary). The only way we'll know what you want is if you let us know. We can't promise to please everybody, but we want to give all our readers the best value around in role-playing adventure. Ω

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NINE-TENTHS OF THE LAW

BY WILLIE WALSH

Expect a surprise when you open a *magic jar.*

Artwork by Kevin Ward

Willie thanks those who took the time to write him, and he invites readers, near or far, to comment, criticize or chat by writing him at 30 Aongus Lawn, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Republic of Ireland. An International Reply Coupon will ensure a response. This module is his tenth to appear in DUNGEON Adventures.

"Nine-Tenths of the Law" is an AD&D® scenario for a party of about five player characters of levels 7-10 (about 45 total levels). A wizard, priest, and rogue should be included in this number, with the balance of the party made up of warriors. AD&D 2nd Edition rules are used in describing character classes and their abilities and spells, but the AD&D 1st Edition game may be used with a little conversion.

The adventure is set in the city of Wysos, which was designed for this module, but it could be set in any large town or city of the Dungeon Master's own design. Investigation is favored over combat in most of this scenario, so the PCs should have alignments tending toward good.

Adventure Background

Twenty years ago, the mage Artanal was besieged by hostile forces led by the governor of the Citadel of Wysos, a free city from which Artanal had fled when its citizens grew tired of his evil schemes. In the course of the siege, the servants of the mage fled or were slain, leaving Artanal to prepare his last, desperate defense against the city troops.

The final battle was fought furiously in the deepest dungeon of the mage's foul lair until, with many enemies slain around him, the magician gave one mighty shout and fell lifeless to the floor—a victim, it was thought, of his own arcane magic. His conquerors burned his body, lest his death be feigned and he might rise again. In triumph, the survivors returned laden with gold and silver from the treasuries of the hidden dungeon, and the world heard no more of Artanal.

No more, that is, except for rumors whispered in the citadel. It was said that not all the wondrous items of the mage's hoard were recovered by the governor, who had left them hidden for his own use should he be in need of money in some unforeseen difficulty. Indeed, survivors of the siege had supposed that hidden rooms existed in the wreck, but they cared little at the time for tackling the horrors likely to be

guarding them. Eventually, after years of speculation, a party of citizens equipped themselves for a long adventure and sought the fabled treasure of Artanal's hoard. They were not disappointed. The secret room was guarded by a golem, and several of their number were slain. They returned with a huge fortune in gems and jewels and rose high in the ranks of the city with their wise investments and generous donations. The city prospered and grew from their patronage, and today (two decades after Artanal's demise) is stronger and richer than ever.

For the Dungeon Master

Such is the tale of Artanal the Mage as it is told in the Citadel of Wysos. As might be expected, however, it is not the full tale.

Artanal was wily and cast about for a means of escape from his fate, but found none until, in the end, he had to make a desperate choice between life and death. In the last moments of the battle, he used a *magic jar* spell to transfer his life force into a specially prepared gem he had stored behind a secret door in the rumored hidden treasury. There he waited as his body was taken away and destroyed.

Time passed as the mage reflected. If the hoard was never found, it was possible he would remain trapped there forever. He considered the guardian golem standing by the door. His life force couldn't be exchanged with that of the monster, due to the golem's magic resistance. The mage must wait, and wait he did, still inside the gem.

As slowly as the movements of the stars through 20 years, so time passed for Artanal in his prison. His hatred and fear grew to threaten his sanity. Wysos would pay when he escaped. He would burn the city to the ground. He would plague its ruins with creatures from the Lower Planes. He would personally—

Artanal sensed a presence. Someone was approaching at last! He stirred and reached out. The golem was activated, and the mage felt the life depart from one, then another of the intruders. In their midst was a strong life force, though Artanal felt something odd about it. With only that merest doubt, Artanal attacked. He lodged in the body of a man from Wysos, reveling in the feel of musty air in real lungs, the taut sinews and strong muscles beneath the armor of a fighter. Around him, the dust of decades lay thick on tarnished silver. He turned toward the melee between the man's companions and the golem, opened his mouth to command the monster, and suddenly knew no more.

When Artanal's mind again became aware of his surroundings, he found himself lying naked by a river in the sunlight. Artanal gently tested his new body. It responded perfectly when he raised an arm, lifted a leg, and rolled over onto his back. The mage sifted through the mind and found no trace of the life force of his host. So the transfer had gone smoothly after all! But how did he get here, and where had his host's armor gone to? Awkwardly but with growing confidence the mage sat, then stood up. A backpack lay nearby, its contents seemingly intact. He rummaged through, found clothing, and put it on. At the bottom of the backpack, under rations that the mage devoured more from nostalgia than from need, was a leather bag. Inside was a pile of gems and a note:

Nerick—Greetings!
We thought that, on account of your change, we'd leave you to your own devices for tonight. We followed your trail after the business in the dungeon, just to see that you were all right. There's food enough to get you back and some clothes. Don't feel we've run out on you—it's just that this werewolf thing is getting a bit scary. Your gear is under the bush. No hard feelings.

Germad

Aghast, Artanal sat Nerick's body—his new body—down slowly and read the note again. A werewolf! No wonder he couldn't remember what had happened! The stress of the *magic jar* transfer and the encounter with the golem must have been too much for his host's system, and he'd changed there and then. Of all the people to choose! But if the change had come on, even after a successful transfer of the man's life force to the *magic jar*, then the body Artanal occupied was diseased, not the life force itself. This needed thinking about.

Grimly, Artanal hefted the backpack and looked about. The pile of gear that his erstwhile companions had left nearby looked too warlike for the mage's tastes, but he nevertheless took the bright long sword and a dagger—the latter showing signs of some magical enchantment—for show and for protection. Even if he'd wanted the armor, its straps and bindings were broken. He toed it back under the bush and made for the hilltop. From there he got his bearings and returned to his lair to make a cursory inspection of his ruined treasury, knowing the adventurers would by now have emptied it. There was a small nook they'd missed, however, and Artanal removed the contents. If he was to get rid of this disease, or if he was to get a fresh host body if the disease wasn't curable, he'd need to recover the gemstone holding Nerick's life force. Some spell books and a priest would prove useful, also. To find the stone, he'd need to find Nerick's companions. If he guessed correctly where they'd go to dispose of their loot and boast of their deeds, he'd find them in Wysos. For the first time in 20 years Artanal smiled. Seeing a familiar landmark, he set out confidently toward it and the road that he knew led to the city beyond.

The Heroes Get Involved

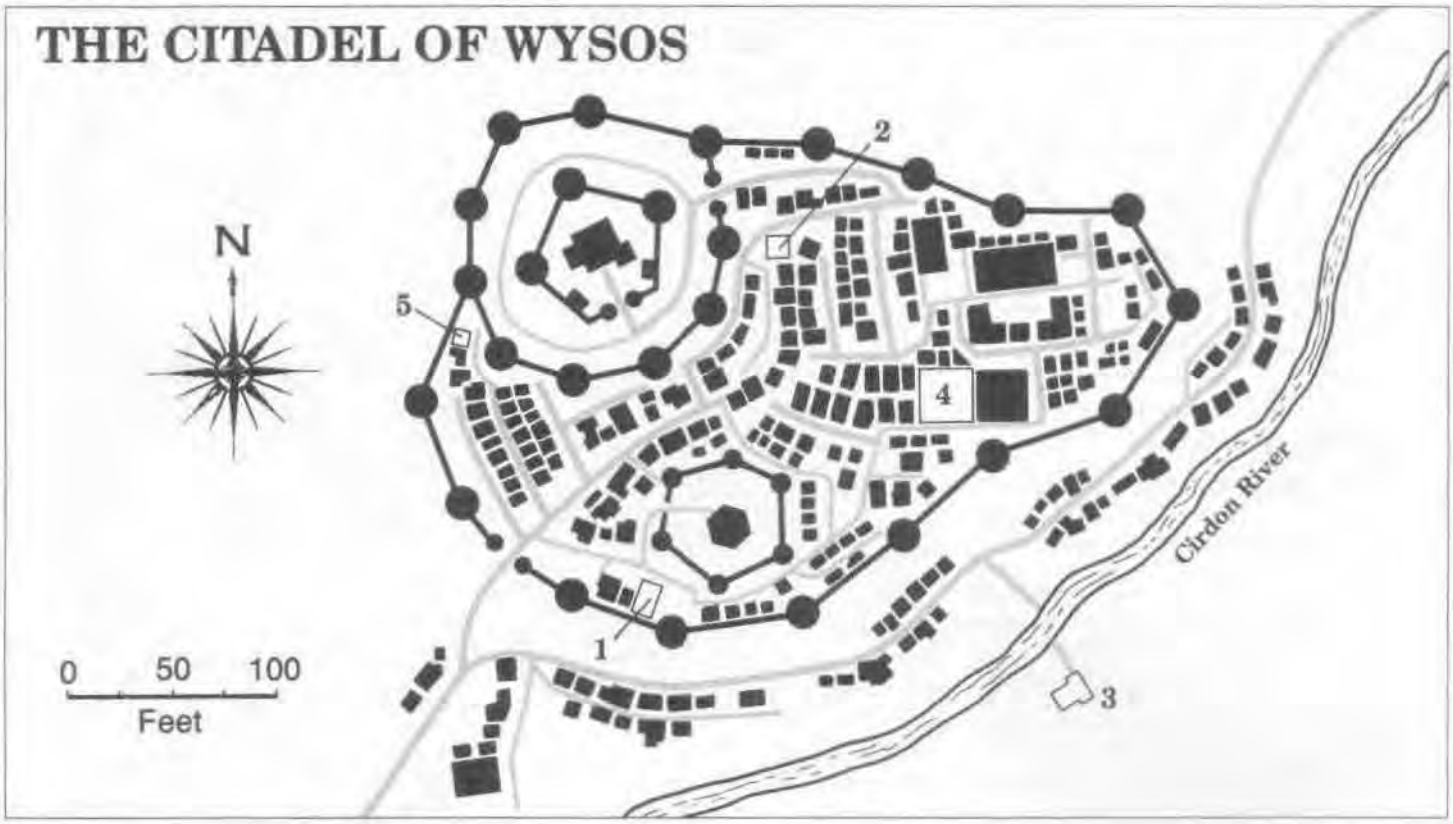
The PCs may be passing through the Citadel of Wysos when Artanal returns there, or they may be regular visitors or residents of the city. The DM should decide how best to explain their presence in Wysos, depending on whether the module is run independently or as part of a larger campaign.

Initially, the mage enters the city in disguise to avoid someone recognizing Nerick and trying to approach him. The Nerick/Artanal partnership is soon firmly established in secret places once frequented by the mage but as yet undiscovered by the city authorities.

The PCs become involved when they're hired by a temple official to conduct the seemingly simple task of tracking down a man named Nerick.

Because this is a city adventure and the person the PCs are looking for does not stay in one place, flexibility is needed in running this scenario. The mage may be one step ahead of the PCs, or he may be uncovering information at a similar or slower rate than the adventurers. The adventure should build up to an encounter with Nerick/Artanal at the Municipal Museum, where he hopes to obtain his *magic jar* gemstone. In the event that he escapes from the PCs there, Artanal's bolt-hole (one of the magician's former lairs) is detailed for a climactic ending to the adventure.

It doesn't matter if the adventure is run over a period as short as a game



week or over several weeks. In the latter instance, the mystery may be investigated while the PCs are between other adventures. However, events follow a broad pattern that always begins with the PCs being asked to track down Nerick for a fee, and should end with a climax in which the adventurers must face the mage in a combat situation. The guts of the adventure—the search by the mage for information leading to the gemstone, the meeting with Germad (and his murder), and the theft of the spell books from Certimfil's study—may follow any logical order the DM desires, based on what clues and rumors the PCs choose to follow.

The PCs begin their involvement when approached by Okinar, a priest of Sefar, a local deity. Read or paraphrase the following boxed descriptions to the players:

> There are few restrictions on travelers coming into the Citadel of Wysos, as you learn on paying a nominal 5 gp per head at the gates to obtain a year's citizenship. The town has outgrown its boundary walls, and houses have begun to spring up to the south along the banks of the Cirdon River. Builders are still prohibited from constructing dwellings against the outer face of the old fortifications, in the interests of security of the inner city. The military bent of the authorities continues to be sustained, as evidenced by the presence of regular patrols of militia and guardsmen, and the maintenance of the strong fortifications around the governor's hall and the tower of the tax collector. Noteworthy buildings include the Municipal Museum and the Temple Precinct, which houses the seven cults of the local gods.
>
> While strolling in this area, your path is blocked by a group of temple slaves carrying a sedan chair.

Carried in the sedan chair is the cleric Okinar, a prominent member of the cult of Sefar, a locally worshiped lawful-neutral deity. Okinar is hiring professional adventurers today, and the PCs are the first group he has encountered since leaving his temple.

> The slaves lower the sedan chair to the ground, and one of them steps forward. He shows his outstretched hands in a gesture of friendliness, then beckons animatedly, seemingly wanting you to approach more closely.

All eight of the slaves are deaf-mutes and unable to communicate their master's business verbally. If the PCs approach, they find a tall, well-built but lavishly dressed individual sitting imperiously behind silk curtains in the chair.

> Inside the carriage is a middle-aged man whom you judge to be a cleric of some high level. He smiles an unattractive smile and asks if he might speak with you for a few moments.

Some days ago, Okinar was approached by a man calling himself Nerick and was paid 2,000 gp in gems, up front, to cure this Nerick of lycanthropy by casting a *remove curse* spell. To be effective, the spell must be cast on the night of a full moon (or the night immediately before or after), when the man is in wereform. By bad luck, the priest had not finished preparation for

this lengthy spell casting when the creature escaped the confines of the temple of Sefar, wounding Okinar and killing several slaves. Okinar has *healed* himself and fortunately is not infected with the magical disease afflicting Nerick.

Okinar wishes to track down Nerick to complete the casting of the spell, as a *divination* indicated he should do, if at all possible. His cult has decided that since, it was Okinar's responsibility to ensure the casting of the spell was carried out safely, it is also his duty to pay for replacement slaves from his own coffers and use Nerick's excess payment to hire adventurers to track down the man (the spell cost 1,200 gp to cast, but Nerick paid 2,000 gp to influence the priest).

Therefore, though in an ill temper, Okinar offers 800 gp to the party to locate Nerick and return him to the temple. Given a choice, he'd have the local authorities track the man down for free, but his superiors have made him take this course of action as a lesson in humility for his carelessness in allowing the lycanthrope an opportunity to escape.

The PCs may haggle if they wish, but the priest won't budge from 800 gp. He will seek another, less greedy, group of adventurers if the PCs won't work for the offered fee. In this case, the PCs must come across Nerick's doings some other way, possibly as the Nerick/Artanal combination seeks to further the mage's ambitions, or the werewolf continues to stalk the city.

If the PCs decide to ferret out Nerick for the priest, he indicates that payment for delivery of the man will be made at the Temple of Sefar. Okinar describes Nerick as a powerfully built man of around 190 lbs. and 30 years of age, with short, graying black hair and a noticeable scar over his left eye. Okinar comments on Nerick's apparent fitness, too, indicating that he may be (or may once have been) an athlete, a soldier, or a guardsman.

Okinar: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; C12; hp 69; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 17, D 17, C 16, I 14, W 18, Ch 13; ML 11; spells: *bless, command, cure light wounds* (×4), *light, protection from evil, detect charm, hold person* (×2), *know alignment, slow poison, speak with animals* (×2), *call lightning, continual light* (×5), *remove curse* (×2), *cure serious wounds* (×4), *cure critical wounds* (×2), *speak with monsters, animate object.* Okinar is usually unarmed, but he now frequently carries a *mace +4* in case he meets Nerick again and is forced to defend himself.

Temple Slaves (8): AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 (×4); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed; won't fight unless *charmed);* ML 6.

In Search of Nerick

The PCs are left much to their own devices while conducting the seemingly straightforward task of looking for Nerick. They may choose to either split up to spread their resources, or stick together to act as a unit.

The Wysos Rumors table allows for either method. Information may be gathered by casual chatter with NPCs, palm-greasing, calling in old markers, or a host of other ways one might expect to employ in a well-populated city.

It's assumed that the PCs are interested in following up on these bits of information in the next few areas and NPC descriptions. In all but area 1 (which Artanal has no interest in visiting), two descriptions are given. The first box describes the relevant NPC(s) before Nerick/Artanal pays a visit; the second describes the area or person(s) if the fugitive has been there before the PCs.

1. Nerick's Old House.

The house you're directed to behind the squat Tower of the Tax Collector is a small, one-room dwelling that appears to have once been quite comfortable in comparison to the other houses on the street. Now, though, the paint is flaked and odd shingles are missing from the sagging roof. Rough steps lead up to an iron-studded door.

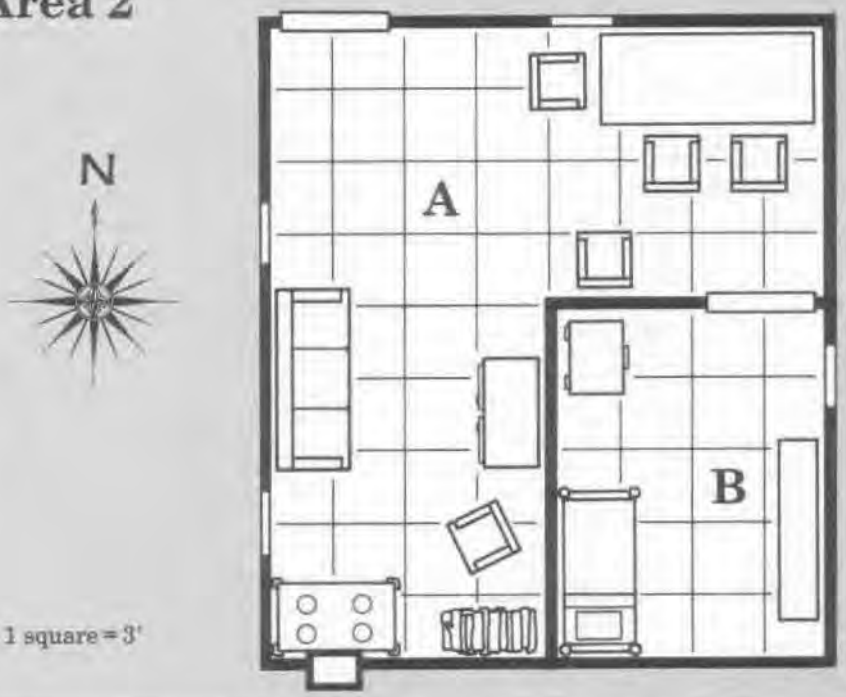
If the PCs knock on the door, they are answered by a thin, tired woman who peers around the door at them suspiciously. This is Cindal—Nerick's wife—who believes him dead. She has not seen him since he left for Artanal's lair three months ago and will not be well disposed toward news that he's alive and at large in the city, especially since Hurot, her current lover, has moved into the house in the belief that Nerick is safely out of the way. Cindal is not too well off at the moment, having lost her job as serving wench at the Black Lion tavern in the past fortnight (and Hurot's attitude toward work leaves a lot to be desired). PCs offering money for information are sure to be well received and asked indoors to share the

Wysos Rumors

Roll 1d6 to randomly determine rumors heard by the PCs, or choose rumors as desired. All rumors on this table are true but may not be completely so.

1. Nerick is a name not heard in Wysos for a couple of months. He was an adventurer, a fighter who failed to return from a wilderness trek 10 weeks ago. Naturally, it was presumed he was dead—so many adventurers end up that way, after all.
2. Someone searching for Nerick might ask for his wife, who serves at the Black Lion tavern near the gates of the city (Nerick's wife no longer works there, but the landlord may direct the PCs to her house; see area 1).
3. The mage Certimfil, who lives in a large house (area 3) on the south bank of the Cirdon River, used to know Nerick. In fact, word has it the wizard was a member of Nerick's old adventuring group. If anyone would know of Nerick's likely hiding places, an old friend like Certimfil might.
4. Nerick left town to abandon a nagging wife named Cindal, who's since taken up with a no-account, would-be trader named Hurot. They share a shack (see area 1) behind the Tower of the Tax Collector—an ironic location, since Hurot never paid a penny of tax in his lifetime. If Nerick was in some kind of trouble, he might seek out Cindal.
5. Nerick is remembered for his large collection of exotic weaponry gathered from foreign lands. He seldom carried fewer than three weapons, and one of these was sure to be exotic. If he's back in town, he'll try to retrieve his collection from his house behind the Tower of the Tax Collector (see also rumor 4).
6. The last report of Nerick was that he'd fallen prey to some form of disease that his companions were loath to bring back to the citadel. Talk had it that they either slew him or abandoned him in the wild. Germad, who's Captain of the Watch, led the party in whose company Nerick adventured.

GERMAD'S QUARTERS
Area 2



couple's meagre meal.

Hurot is a small, weak-willed man who once aspired to become a trader in mercantile products. When he discovered that work and willpower were needed in larger quantities than he cared to invest, his expectations lessened. He's no hero but will stand up to anyone he feels is insulting Cindal—everyone but Nerick, of whom he has an almost paranoid fear. He doesn't realize that he has no reason to be afraid of Nerick, who could not care less about Cindal and Hurot's liaison. Hurot dreads some nasty revenge, but Nerick (when himself) will treat the whole affair with indifference.

Inside, the house is damp, but some effort has been made to keep it clean. Furnishings consist of a single table with twin bench seats and a large, surprisingly luxurious bed. Weapons and oddments of martial gear are displayed about the walls. PCs rolling their intelligence or less on 1d20 notice telltale dust outlines of several weapons that no longer hang in their accustomed places. Cindal and Hurot claim to know nothing about Nerick's return, and they are not lying. The empty spaces do not mean that the fighter retrieved any of his precious possessions recently. Instead, the answer is more mundane: Cindal pawned or sold some of the weapons to buy food for herself and Hurot.

Weapons remaining include an arquebus (with neither shot nor powder), a long blowgun loaded with a rusted needle, a heavily carved club of some foreign tribal design, a harpoon made from obsidian, a light crossbow with 12 quarrels, and a heavy battle axe. The more exotic weapons from Nerick's past campaigns seem to have all been disposed of, possibly because they'd fetch more money.

Cindal knows that Germad, the Captain of the Watch, was a crony of Nerick's. She's been trying unsuccessfully to get him to pay compensation to her for the loss of her husband since his disappearance—and she's stepped up her demands since the loss of her own income from the Black Lion. She tells the PCs that Germad must have known all along that his old pal would be back in town, so perhaps they should seek out Germad if they want to locate Nerick. Cindal can direct the party to the captain's quarters with no difficulty.

Cindal and Hurot: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 3, 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); ML 9 (5 in presence of Nerick).

2. Captain Germad's Quarters. The first boxed description should be used if the PCs are encountering Germad before Artanal/Nerick has paid him a visit.

> You find Germad's quarters to be a simple, military-built billet house near the gates to the Governor's Palace. The house is made from dressed stone, with windows one can tightly shutter from the inside. A thin wisp of smoke rising from a small chimney on the tiled roof indicates the likelihood that someone's at home.

Germad is Captain of the Watch and responsible for the security of the largest inhabited section of the city. Another body of men is responsible for the defense of the area encompassing the Governor's Palace and the area of the Tower of the Tax Collector.

The position of captain is one that Germad secured recently, on his return from the exploration of Artanal's lair. It is rumored that he bought his way into the rank with money found on that particular adventure. (As it happens, this rumor is true but doesn't bear any consequences for this particular adventure.)

Germad is a man of action who also savors the pleasures of the flesh, as can be seen by the comfortable way he has furnished the once-severe billet house.

The captain is at once surprised and concerned by the news that Nerick is allegedly in Wysos, particularly if the PCs recount the tale told them by Okinar. Germad's concern is both personal and professional, for he believed Nerick dead, and no report of a lycanthrope at large has come to him from the Temple of Sefar (which report it is the priests' civic duty to make). It is soon obvious that the captain has no knowledge of the present whereabouts of Nerick, though he can relate the following facts to the PCs:

Germad was the leader of the party that located the secret treasury of the dead mage Artanal. The others included Nerick, a fighter; Bundane, a thief; Certimfil, a mage; and Kernin, a priest. Bundane and Kernin were slain in the fight with Artanal's guardian golem, and Germad and Certimfil were left to fight it alone when Nerick's lycanthropy—which they hoped to cure from

proceeds of the adventure—got the better of him and made him run wild through the hills. After defeating the golem, the remainder of the party followed Nerick's trail and left him clothing and his share of the treasure, thinking he'd follow them to the city. He never showed up. When he failed to show up after several months, they presumed he was dead.

Germad can tell the PCs that Nerick's wife still lives in the city, as does the mage Certimfil (on the outskirts of town, across the Cirdon River). He suggests that Nerick might have contacted one of these two, as he's certainly not approached Germad.

The interior of the house is softened by hanging tapestries and a thin but serviceable carpet. A partition made from newer materials than the main structure divides the building into two rooms. An efficient stove heats the room that serves as both kitchen and living room. The small bedroom's furnishings include a bookcase and a chest holding items of clothing.

Germad, Captain of the Watch: AL NG; AC 0 (8 at home); MV 6 (12 at home); F8; hp 68; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/53, D 16, C 17, I 15, W 15, Ch 18; ML 15. On duty, Germad wears plate mail and carries a shield—unusual for a city guardsman, but Germad didn't get to be powerful by being careless. He possesses a *long sword +2*.

Use the following boxed description if the PCs come to the house after Artanal has been there.

> You find Germad's quarters near the gates of the Governor's Palace. The stone structure is seemingly a converted military billet house, judging by other buildings nearby. You notice the heavy door is slightly ajar, and the interior of the house looks dark and quiet.

Germad's bloody corpse is sprawled on the floor near the doorway. The body is covered with knife wounds, many of which are in its back. The house has been ransacked, though it's difficult to determine if anything is missing. The following areas provide items and clues of possible interest to the PCs.

2A. Kitchen and Living Room. The doors to the kitchen cupboard (which sits across from the sofa almost in the center of the house) are thrown wide, and the shelves are bare of foodstuffs and utensils alike. Artanal took the provisions and utensils for his own use, having heard a rumor that Okinar has hired people to find Nerick. It may be a while before he dares obtain items normally, so this theft will tide him over for a few days.

The rest of the room is upended in a peculiar way. A thief PC of any level is 50% likely to recognize the faked nature of the ransacking: items aren't sifted through in search of valuables. Only the area immediately in front of the stove shows signs of the struggle between Germad and his assailant, but a trail of bloodstains leads to the front door.

The mage arrived in his current guise of Nerick and succeeded in persuading Germad that he was truly the missing fighter. Germad was further tricked into revealing the location of the gem that Artanal used for his *magic jar* spell, after which the mage took advantage of an unguarded moment to set upon Germad, mortally wounding him. He then attempted to duplicate the effects of a robbery by turning over everything in the rooms. He was helped by the solidity of the structure of the billet house, which muffled the noise of the melee and ransacking and so prevented the neighbors or passersby from detecting the trouble.

2B. Bedroom. The chest in the northwest corner is a sturdy, iron-bound wooden case and is unlocked. Though the chest has been opened and apparently rummaged through, a small bag of 57 gp in the pocket of a carefully folded coat has not been removed. The mage neglected his role as thief in his haste to make things look realistic. Some other items discarded as superfluous by Artanal are also in the chest: a finely sharpened nonmagical dagger, a *helm of telepathy*, and a magical *short sword +2*.

The contents of the bookshelf on the east wall have been carelessly swept onto the floor. One of the two ceramic bookends has been smashed. Rulebooks for the city watch, biographies of famous fighting men, a guide to swordmaking, and an illustrated guide to armor types are representative subjects from the scattered volumes. One item of interest is a book whose uneven handwritten style indicates a diary; it is titled *Journal and Memoir of Germad the Fighter.*

Apart from accounts of battles with many human and nonhuman foes in far-flung lands that occurred many years in the past, the author also relates news about his more recent doings. The latest entry reads:

> *. . . Received some disturbing news this day. It seems likely that Nerick has returned to Wysos, as people representing Okinar of Sefar have been asking about him in the city. His lycanthropy must be taking control. I must alert the watch to be on the lookout—my old companion must be taken dead or alive before it's too late . . .*

An entry from eight weeks previous reads as follows:

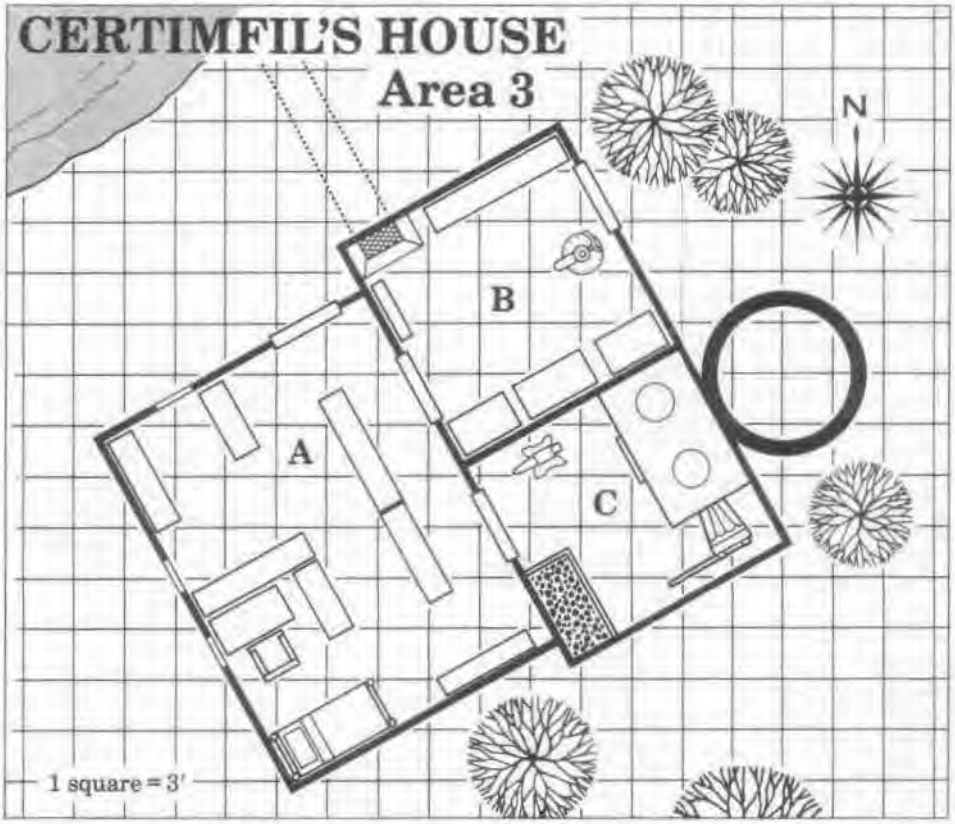
> *. . . Certimfil wanted to either tie Nerick up or slay him while he slept, but I dissuaded him.*
>
> *"Let him have a chance," I said. He had been a fine companion once and was owed that chance. I filled his pack with food as well as gems from Artanal's foul lair and left a hurried note.*
>
> *We came to the citadel at dusk of the following evening, and the gates then being closed, we stayed at the mage's home by the river. It was a strained affair at best, for the matter of Nerick lay heavily on our minds. I regretted abandoning Nerick, and harsh words were said between Certimfil and me so that we divided the treasure and parted with no farewells in the morning. I kept the shining gem myself, and I doubt if Certimfil even saw it. I may sell it separately, as a curiosity, though its inner light is quite attractive. Perhaps I'll keep it myself . . .*

An entry from a week later reads:

> *. . . I sold the gems for a good price—far more than I'd expected—so I felt guilty again about Nerick not sharing in our good fortune. Each time I look at the curious gem I'm reminded of Nerick, who has failed to return to the citadel. We shouldn't have left him! I know it's no more than an attempt at easing a guilty conscience, but I'm going to donate the special gem to the Municipal Museum instead of either keeping or selling it. Given Certimfil's attitude, I'll not show it to him now. He's retired to studies of his own, so I may as well concentrate on my own ambitions . . .*

There follows mundane material outlining Germad's purchasing of the captaincy of the watch, for the mutual benefit of both Wysos and Germad, and the efficient and diligent way in which the fighter attended to his duties. The diary finishes with the reported reappearance of Nerick in the citadel.

What the PCs make of these excerpts is up to them. They may presume that Nerick is motivated by revenge, for his companions left him alone in the wilderness, or their attention may be drawn



toward the curious gemstone (actually the *magic jar)* that Germad donated to the museum. They may also wish to pay a call on Certimfil (see area 3).

3. Certimfil's House.

It's easy to find Certimfil's house, as it's the only dwelling constructed on the south bank of the Cirdon River. The house is made up of three connected buildings, each with its own exit. Apparently, the mage uses each section for a different purpose, as one emits a decidedly chemical odor, another is surrounded by heaps of ash and slag, and the third is barred and shuttered from within. A large chimney rises from the rear of the house.

There were three small houses here once, but Certimfil purchased all three and converted them to his own uses. There is little of anything one would associate with a normal dwelling inside, for Certimfil makes use of all available space for his studies, except for a small bed in a corner. He gets his meals at an eatery across the river.

Certimfil is a taciturn individual who prefers his magical studies to most company. He'll welcome fellow practitioners of the magical arts, though, so PC wizards may be more useful in dealing with Certimfil than other classes. If a PC suggests swapping a spell with Certimfil in return for information, allow a 50% chance for the mage to accept the proposal, providing the PC meets any cost of the rewriting of the spell(s).

The mage never liked Nerick, and he made no bones about it. Being of extremely practical bent, Certimfil saw the inclusion of a known lycanthrope in the adventuring party as absurdly dangerous since no one could predict his behavior. And indeed, two of the party died while Nerick was off somewhere in wereform and unavailable to fight the golem. In addition, there was no guarantee that Nerick's fellow adventurers would not eventually become his victims. Only Germad's intervention persuaded Certimfil that the fighter should be given another chance.

On the PCs' first visit (assuming Artanal hasn't paid a call already), Certimfil knows nothing of where the party might locate the fighter. Because of the bad feeling between himself and Germad over Nerick, Certimfil wasn't given an opportunity to examine the shining gemstone in the division of the treasure (Germad coveted it and slipped it into a pocket before leaving the mage's lair) and knows nothing of its existence. He suggests the adventurers try to locate Nerick at his old house (area 1) or at Germad's quarters (area 2).

Certimfil the Mage: AL LN; AC 6; MV 12; M9; hp 30; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 17, D 18, C 15, I 17, W 13, Ch 14; ML 14; spells: *hypnotism, magic missile* (×3), *alter self, fog cloud, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, fly, infravision, phantom steed, dig, dimension door, passwall.*

If the PCs arrive after Artanal has already been there, use the following boxed description:

Certimfil's threefold house is well lit, but sounds of shouting can be heard from inside. As you approach, a door opens and the mage exits in a highly animated state.

All of Certimfil's spell books have been stolen, leaving him with only those spells he has memorized. He's just a tad less than hysterical, especially since he's been paying the thieves' guild protection money against such a possibility. Unfortunately, he's not covered by any more useful "insurance." In the circumstances, he could do with some help, and he indicates that the PCs may be the recipients of a 3,000-gp reward if they return the books safely to him.

The following sections describe the rooms in Certimfil's house after the theft has occurred.

3A. Study. The only concession to comfort in this, the largest of Certimfil's rooms, is the simple bed in the southwest corner. Six large bookcases, a desk, and a chair are the other furnishings. The contents of the shelves are now in disarray, with gaps showing places from which the various books and tomes containing valuable spells have been taken.

Certimfil habitually *wizard locks* all doors and windows in the house, and adds the additional safeguards of heavy dead bolts in case of failure of his magical protections. Only the door connecting with the laboratory (area 3B) has had its *wizard lock* protection *dispelled.*

The PCs may note, or be told by Cer-

timfil himself, that only the more valuable writings have been taken. Though this doesn't amount to more than a sign that the burglary was carried out by someone who knew what he was looking for, the DM should allow the adventurers to reach this conclusion for themselves. Certimfil was asleep at the time of the robbery and can offer no clues.

A ranger, or a PC with tracking proficiency, may attempt to search the floor for clues if he declares he is doing so. If other PCs have been in the room already, the roll is made at a penalty of −5 on the die. If a successful roll is made, the PC detects a set of muddy prints, made by a barefoot human, leading back and forth from the connecting door to the laboratory. Prints have been carefully erased in area 3B.

3B. Laboratory. Though the outer door to this chamber is still locked, the *wizard lock* on the connecting door to the study has been *dispelled.* Inside, the odor of chemicals and strange, noxious substances is almost overpowering. Furnishings include three heavy workbenches along the wall to the southeast; a hand pump near the outer exit; a long table against the northwest wall; a large drainage sump for waste materials in the northwest corner; and a rack of fine crystal flasks, beakers, and oddly shaped containers against the southwest wall.

Anyone following the trail of prints from area 3A discovers that the trail has been purposely erased from the floor of the laboratory. Spell components of different types adorn the tables and rack, though an inventory of Certimfil's goods will show that components for many (but not all) of the spells stolen from the study are also missing.

A PC carefully examining the drainage sump must successfully pass his detect secret doors roll (if he is an elf or half-elf) to notice that the grille in the bottom of the sump is slightly off square, as if it had been removed and then carelessly replaced. A PC who is not an elf may roll his intelligence score as a percentage to notice this. This is the entrance that the thief used to bypass Certimfil's other barriers. A 4'-diameter pipe leads underground to the northwest, emerging above the Cirdon River. Tracks of booted and bare feet may be found here and there on the riverbank. The bare footprints correspond with those the PCs may have found in the study. The boot marks are about the same size.

Artanal removed his footwear before climbing up the pipe to gain access to the house. He used his one remaining *dispel magic* spell to eliminate the *wizard lock* on the connecting door. Then he stole those spells and components he recognized from having learned successfully before, after which he left via the drain and retrieved his footwear.

3C. Forge. Both doors to this area are *wizard locked.* The large forge fire inside is surmounted on the outside of the building with a high brick chimney. A large bellows is connected to the furnace in the eastern corner. Opposite this, in the southern corner of the room, is a crate of charcoal. An anvil with typical tools rests near the connecting door to the study.

Certimfil conducts various experiments here, though none seem to have been carried out recently. The furnace is banked but warm. Outside, ash and slag are dumped near the door. There are no signs of disturbance anywhere in this room.

Thieves' Guild Rumors

If a PC thief decides that a visit to contacts in the local thieves' guild might prove profitable in recovering Certimfil's spell books (or if he doesn't think of this, and the DM decides to have the guild question *him*), the DM should allow the thief to pick up the following information:

The guild is both surprised and angry that the home of their "good friend" Certimfil was burgled. In fact, the guild would be most anxious to locate the freelancer who had given the "honest citizens of Wysos" such an ill-deserved reputation.

Should the PCs ask about any sightings of Nerick, either in connection with the recovery of the missing spell books or in their continued search for the fighter, the following guild-based rumors from operatives about the city may be gleaned for the not unreasonable fee of 50 gp a rumor.

To assign rumors randomly, roll 1d6 and consult the Thieves' Guild Rumors table:

1. A man fitting Nerick's description was seen in a hostelry across the river from Certimfil's house yesterday. He asked questions about the mage's recent past. In particular, he asked about Certimfil's adventuring days.
2. Nerick was heard in the Black Lion tavern asking for news of a fighter named Germad, and specifically asking what Germad had done with any treasures he retrieved from Artanal's lair.
3. Nerick visited all the jewelers and gemcutters in town, asking those who had dealings with Germad if they had purchased a certain glowing gemstone. Nerick was prepared to pay a great deal of gold to buy the gemstone from its current owner.
4. Nerick approached the curator of the Municipal Museum and requested to be allowed access to the uncataloged gemstone that had been donated to the museum by Captain Germad of the Watch. He was refused on the grounds that he must wait to see the exhibit on public display, just like everyone else.
5. A thief named Somblet met Nerick last week and hailed him as an old friend. The fighter was evasive and uneasy, and didn't seem to recognize the thief. Somblet remarked that he didn't seem like the old Nerick at all. For one thing, he wasn't visibly armed, though Somblet detected a dagger hidden in his robes.
6. Someone fitting Nerick's description was seen a night back walking along the bank of the Cirdon River carrying a bulky parcel. He was dressed in robes and unarmored, which is totally out of character for the fighter.

A Visit to the Museum

The adventurers should now be equipped with the following pieces of knowledge:
—Nerick is definitely in the city.
—He's armed and dangerous.
—He's suffering from lycanthropy.
—He's acting very strangely in comparison to his normal self.
—He's probably responsible for the murder of Germad.
—He most likely stole Certimfil's spell books.
—He has an interest in acquiring access to the gem that Germad donated to the Municipal Museum.

Logically, the next port of call for the investigating PCs is the museum and its new exhibition of the Shining Gemstone.

4. The Municipal Museum. The museum is a large building near the Temple Precinct of the city. Its large double doors are seldom used and are

kept securely locked from the inside. Entrance to members of the public may be gained between the hours of 11 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., using the side entrances. Briefly, these are the important areas of the museum:

4A. These side entrances afford access to the interior of the building.

4B. This exhibit of exotic birds and dried plants is contained in airtight display cases with oval glass covers.

4C. These cases contain old coins and wooden tallies once used in the citadel. The coins are equivalent to 500 gp in modern money (they're still serviceable if liberated from their glass-topped containers), but the tallies are worthless.

4D. The northern exhibit is a small stuffed brownie. The southern exhibit is a wax mock-up of a head, wearing a fancy helmet of an antique design once worn by guardsmen in the citadel.

4E. The northern exhibit is a moth-eaten replica of a *carpet of flying* that the first governor of Wysos was said to have owned. The other exhibit is a good copy of his alleged magical lamp.

4F. The 14 small displays along the east and north walls contain different minerals and odd rocks. The stones are all curious specimens because of their color or shape but have no commercial value.

4G. The case in the corner is large and contains a tableau of a stuffed ogre eating a wax model of a goblin. The ogre is showing signs of moldiness.

4H. This single display is of shells and pearls. It is executed in fine detail and with vibrant colors to replicate a seashore setting. The pearls are worth a total of 100 gp.

4I. The smaller displays are of military decorations. The larger case holds three suits of plate mail worth about 300 gp each. These are real museum pieces, in all senses of the phrase.

4J. These three cases show artifacts dug up when a new town well was excavated. These items of pottery and everyday use are from a period of habitation prior to the laying down of the foundations of the citadel.

4K. The three stuffed tigers in this case were originally given to a governor of Wysos as hunting beasts by a foreign delegation. They all died of a strange malady a few days after arriving in the citadel.

4L. The larger case holds an egg of spherical shape, about 2' in diameter and allegedly from a dragon (it's from a sea turtle—a big one!) The smaller cases hold a variety of eggs from local domestic and wild creatures.

4M. These four cases display stuffed reptiles including a python, some poisonous members of the snake family, and an iguana.

4N. This is the desk where the curator, Gerfeld Blim, spends much of his time asleep. Few people visit the museum, as there's always something better to do in Wysos, so he sleeps to avoid boredom. It's only when there's a new exhibit like the Shining Gemstone that

visitors usually come and he's required to be awake.

Slow-moving, low-talking, and sleepy-eyed, the curator is a stickler for the rules and enforces them rigidly whenever he can. He opens the museum punctually at 11 A.M. and closes it strictly at 4:30 P.M.

Blim can confirm the rumor about Nerick having visited the museum with the intention of purchasing the gemstone. He reports that his visitor returned yesterday (the day the new exhibit opened), looked only briefly at the exhibit, and glanced impatiently at the small crowd of onlookers before stamping out again, muttering to himself.

The curator was near the exit and thought he heard Nerick mutter something about "... tonight ..." and "... getting smells ..." In fact, Artanal muttered, "It's safe here. Do the house tonight. Get some spells."

Gerfeld Blim: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; HD 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9.

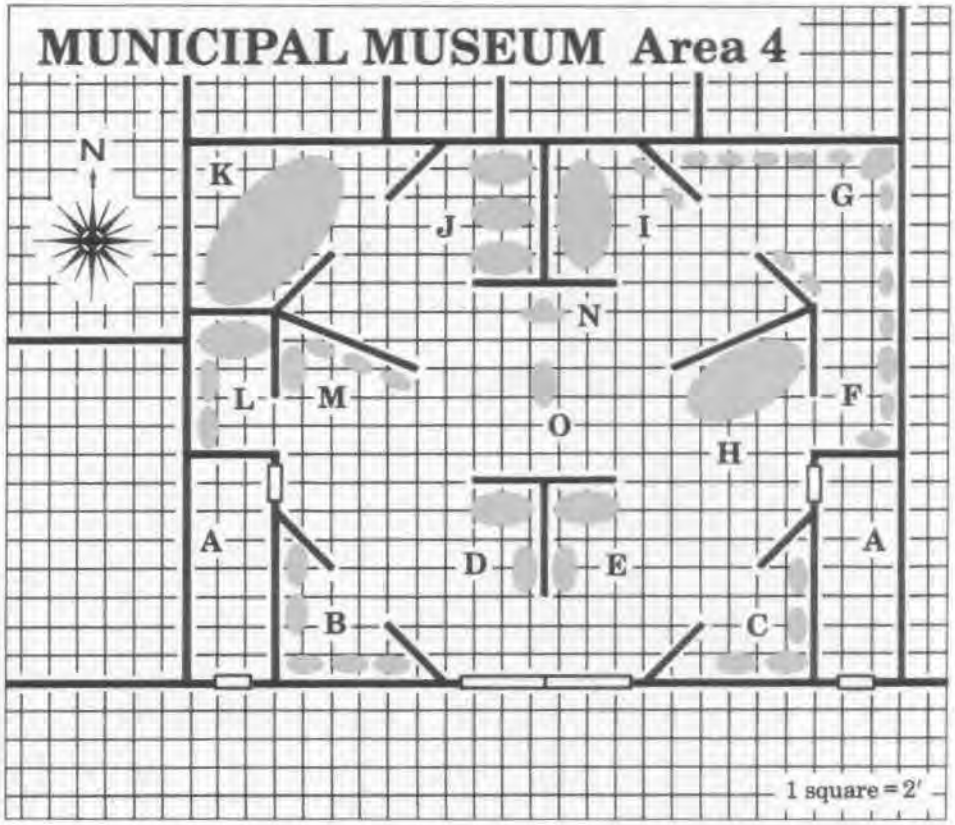
4O. The Shining Gemstone. This is the new exhibit that all the fuss is about. It's a well-cut ruby with a slight flaw in its center shaped like a clenched fist. The gem shines brightly even when in shadow, and some observers have fancied it flickers sometimes, too. The ruby holds the life force of Nerick, but only a character possessing a *magic jar* spell will recognize the gem for what it is.

If anyone casts a *dispel magic* spell on the gem (the base chance is 50% +/− 5% per level difference between the caster's level and Artanal's), Nerick's life force is forced out of the gemstone. If Artanal (in Nerick's body) is not within 120 yards at the time, Nerick's essence has nowhere to go and he dies. If the mage is within range, the life force of the fighter returns to its body, while Artanal's life force is shunted back into the gem.

If someone casts a *dispel magic* spell on Artanal, his essence is driven out of Nerick's body and back into the gemstone—if within 120 yards of the stone. Chances of success are the same as those shown above for casting the spell on the gemstone. If outside the 120-yard range when forced out of Nerick's body, the mage dies. As a reciprocal effect, Nerick's life force will also be killed as his body is outside the spell's range.

If Nerick's body is within range and proper transferral occurs (Nerick's life force to his own body; Artanal's life force to the gemstone), there will be a time lapse of 1-4 rounds plus one round per level of the caster who *dispelled* the magic before either Artanal or Nerick can act, due to disorientation. Artanal may attempt a *magic jar* attack from the gemstone if any PC or NPC is within range after the time lapse has passed.

If the gemstone is broken and the host body and trapped life force are not within 120 yards of each other, both life forces die. If within range, Nerick gets his body back and Artanal dies, leaving Nerick with a lot of explaining to do. See pages 169-170 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* for full details on this spell.



A Meeting With a Stranger

Should the PCs stake out the museum or hide inside, their patience will be rewarded with a visit in the dead of the night by a person fitting Nerick's description. He artlessly forces the lock on one of the doors and slips inside.

With him, attempting to hide in the shadows of the street outside, is an iron cobra. If any PCs follow the mage indoors, the monster sneaks up behind them to attack (with surprise, if it successfully hides). If all the PCs are in the museum, the monster remains hidden outside to act as a rear guard if Artanal seeks to escape from a melee with the adventurers.

Iron cobra: Int non; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison (save at −2 or die) for three consecutive bites; SD unaffected by mind-based attacks, immune to *web*, half damage from normal weapons, hide in shadows 49%, save vs. spells as 12th-level wizard; MR special; SZ S; ML 20; XP 120; FF/52.

In the museum, Artanal attempts to get near the gem and steal it. If the PCs don't hinder him, he leaves the premises and makes for his hideaway at area 5. The adventurers may meet him there for a final confrontation.

If the PCs challenge Artanal in the museum, he resorts to using those spells he's successfully learned from Certimfil's spell books. The next few paragraphs briefly describe his tactics.

When Artanal enters the museum, he has already cast an *infravision* spell, so he can detect any non-*invisible* creature within 60 yards that gives off unmasked

body heat. Additionally, he has cast a *stoneskin* spell to protect against armed watchmen. This gives him protection against 1d4 +6 nonmagical attacks before the spell ends. The *non-detection* spell he's also cast is in operation as he enters the museum.

If attacked, Artanal retaliates immediately by casting *magic missiles* at up to five targets within view—including those he can see with his 60-yard *infravision*.

On the next round, Artanal can use a *telekinesis* spell on a character weighing up to 300 lbs., if he wins initiative and the target fails a saving throw vs. spells. The target must be within 120 yards to be successfully attacked, and damage from impact with floor or walls equals 1d6 +3 hp. Spell-casters so hurled lose any spell about to be cast.

In the next round, Artanal attempts to cast a *fear* spell. Anyone in the area of effect who fails a saving throw vs. spells flees the building in panic, running at top movement rate for 12 rounds.

If adversaries are present in the next round, the mage attempts to cast a *chaos* spell within his 60-yard range and in a suitable area. If successful, the mage makes good his escape if unhindered (not necessarily with the gem in his possession). If unsuccessful in routing the PCs, he prepares a *magic missile* spell to cover an escape attempt in the following round.

For every round of combat with the PCs, there is a 15% cumulative chance the mage will turn into his wereform and attack in an insane rage (assume the change brings him to full hit points in werewolf form if he's been damaged to a point below this figure). If Artanal loses 50% or more of his hit points in wereform form, he tries to escape.

Artanal (human form): AL CE; AC 6; MV 12; M12; hp 70 (or 57 in his own body); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 17, D 18, C 17, I 18, W 12, Ch 17; ML 15; XP 7,000; spells: *armor, hypnotism, magic missile* (×2, five missiles per casting), *fog cloud, locate object, misdirection, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, fly, infravision* (used), *non-detection* (used), *vampiric touch, detect scrying, fear, illusionary wall, stoneskin* (used), *animate dead, chaos, magic jar, telekinesis, geas*. Artanal carries a magical *dagger +1* for use when all else fails.

Artanal (werewolf form): Int average; AL CE; AC 5; MV 15; HD 4 +3; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA surprise on 1-3; SD hit only by silvered or magical weapons, heal 10% to 60% of wounds at end of change; SZ M; ML 12; XP 420; MC (lycanthrope). Treat the werewolf's strength as 19 for purposes of combat if the PCs attempt to net or grapple him.

If Artanal is Slain

If the PCs kill Artanal's host body within 120 yards of the gemstone, the mage will be forced back into the stone and helpless for 1-4 rounds. Nerick's life force will depart, having no body to call its own. The PCs may subsequently be recipients of a *magic jar* attack from the gemstone.

What happens after this is up to the DM. The mage will have no spell components for his memorized spells if he successfully obtains a fresh body from a PC. Perhaps the adventure will continue with the mage "hijacking" one of the adventurers and trying to escape.

In no event will Okinar pay out 800 gp for a dead body, although the city officials may be interested in paying reward

money if the PCs get Okinar to verify their story of killing a lycanthrope. Otherwise, the adventurers might find themselves accused of murder. If they can prove the body is that of a lycanthrope (it inconveniently changes back to human form after death), they may be eligible for an 800-gp reward from the city authorities.

If Artanal is Captured

If the PCs succeed in capturing the fugitive, allow them to carry off "Nerick" to Okinar's quarters in the Temple of Sefar. The priest will pay them their reward for the safe return of his client. Okinar proceeds to complete the ceremony that cures Nerick's body of lycanthropy, after which Artanal is free to go.

What the PCs do about Germad's murder and the theft of Certimfil's spell books is up to them. If the PCs do not pursue these matters, Artanal will have a free rein in plotting his revenge on the city—a situation beyond the scope of this adventure but possibly involving the PCs at a later date.

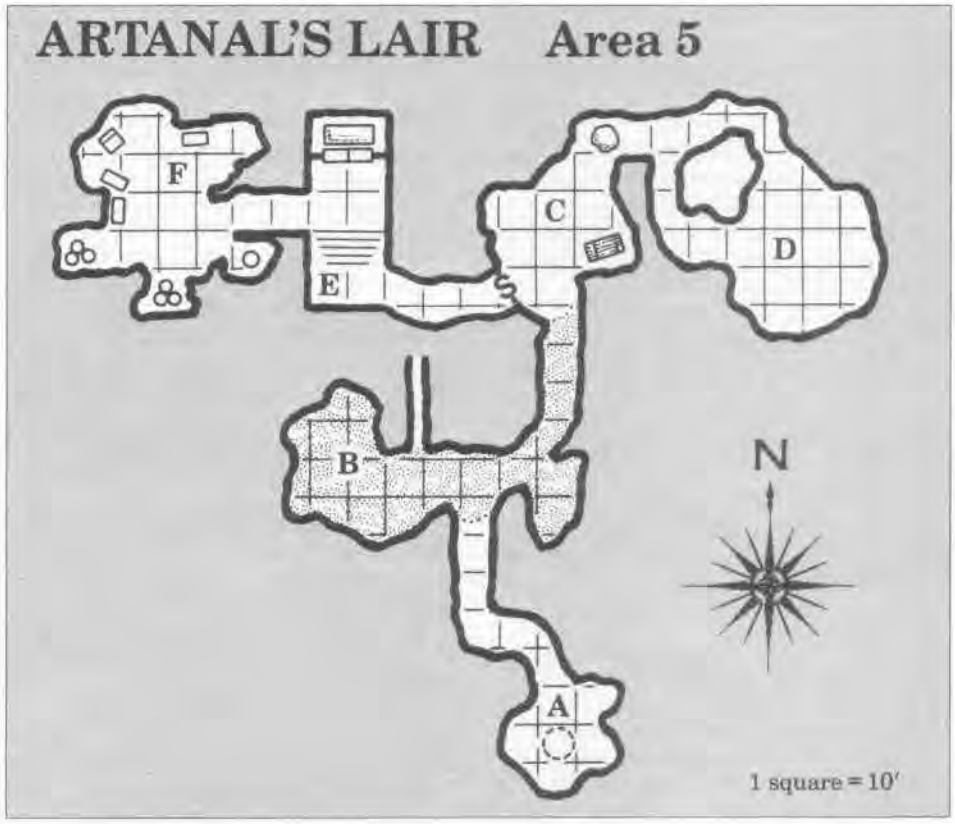
Though now cured of his lycanthropy, Artanal may still choose to steal the gemstone in order to preserve it from possible destruction and his immediate demise. This might involve the PCs in yet another investigation.

If the adventurers insist on having Nerick tried as a murderer or thief, the mage may be brought to court (or may escape before his trial) and so become a true enemy of the PCs.

If Artanal Escapes

The adventure continues! If the mage escapes his encounter in the museum (or later custody), the adventurers may decide to pursue him across the city. In this event, allow a fair pursuit across town, finishing at the mage's hideout (area 5) in the city. The climax is reached in a final confrontation with Artanal in his bolt-hole.

If the PCs cannot follow due to incapacitation, or somehow lose Artanal in the chase, they can find his new lair through the intervention of the thieves' guild, who by now have had enough of Nerick's doings (actually Artanal's doings, of course) and want him out of the way. As the guild considers the PCs "neutrals," the adventurers can be given the job of dealing with him, taking whatever action they want against the fugitive. In return, the guild gives the PCs information from its spies about Nerick's hideout, and will train a PC thief up to his next level for half the regular fee (assuming he has sufficient experience points to progress). Refer to the Citadel of Wysos and Artanal's Lair maps when reading the following descriptions.



5. The Shack. This wooden structure is the last in a long line of similar buildings in a very seedy part of the city. The DM may crowd 3-12 poverty-stricken NPCs into each shack. These poor souls are unlikely to either aid or hinder the PCs in their activities. Most are members of the thieves' guild, and a report of the adventurers' presence in the area will be at guild headquarters within half an hour. No one will alert the authorities for fear of awkward questioning.

Inside, the shack contains a single table, chair, and candle. Food taken from Germad's kitchen is in a sack near the stuffed rag mattress. Beneath the mattress is a concealed trapdoor to a short tunnel leading to Artanal's secret lair beneath the city. If PCs are in hot pursuit, the mage will scoot down here to lie low for a while or prepare a suitable reception in his own surroundings. If the adventurers have found the place through another means, the mage will be relaxing in his lair, studying his stolen spell books.

5A. Tunnel.

> The trapdoor opens into a rough-hewn tunnel that winds northward. All is quiet except for the infrequent plops of dripping moisture.

If the adventurers enter the tunnel, they'll have no difficulty in smelling the cesspool at area 5B.

5B. Cesspool.

> The tunnel comes into what looks like a natural cave but which has the unmistakable odor of a cesspool. A large waste pipe set high into the north wall of the cave disgorges a stream of sewage in a gurgling splash. Ominous shapes move about in the pool of semi-identifiable mess.

The cave holds water from natural seepage in the rocks above. The rate of drainage of the pool is fairly constant, so buildings on the surface uses it as a

convenient waste disposal site, while Artanal uses it as a convenient moat. In the 4'-deep semi-liquid pool live six white alligators that subsist on the waste and an occasional unwise rat. Artanal uses a skiff to cross the pool if his *flight* spell has been expended. The alligators don't bother the skiff, but anyone foolish enough to swim or wade through the noisome gunk is fair game.

Alligators (6): Int animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, swim 12; HD 3; hp 8, 6 (×2), 3; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-12; SA surprise on 1-3; SZ L; ML 9; XP 65; MC (crocodile).

Like the (now stuffed) tigers in the museum, these creatures were presented to a high-ranking official of Wysos. Being an unwanted gift, they were flushed down a convenient drain. In order to conserve energy, they do not ever leave the pool.

5C. Artanal's Skiff.

> A small wooden skiff with a long pole thrown down beside it is beached here in a spreading pool of waste water. To the north, a boulder half blocks the exit tunnel heading east.

If the PCs are in pursuit of the mage, he hurriedly pushed aside this stone as a lure to the PCs before exiting the cave via the secret door in the west wall. Otherwise, the stone blocks the escape of the ice lizard (see area 5D) that Artanal created from experimenting with the *bag of beans* he owns.

Not everything in Artanal's lair outside the city was discovered by the original raiders, nor by Germad's group. The mage recovered his *bag of beans* and his *wand of lightning* from the wreck and will use both in his defense against the PCs. Two beans have already been planted and watered; a patch of brown mold and an ice lizard await the PCs in the next cave.

5D. Cold Cave.

> The tunnel forks around a pillar of rock. The two branches open into a large cave.

As the PCs enter this area, they grow cold and their torches begin to die (the initial effects of the brown mold). The DM should check for surprise. If the PCs are surprised, the ice lizard that lives in this cave gets a free attack with its breath weapon. If the PCs are not surprised, roll normally for initiative.

Brown mold: Int non; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD nil; hp nil; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA freezing; SD absorb heat; SZ S; ML nil; XP nil; MC (mold).

Ice lizard: Int low; AL CE; AC 1; MV 9, fly 15 (C) [as white dragon: 12, fly 40 (E); HD 3+3; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-3/1-3; SA spells, cold breath weapon; MR 80% except vs. *charm* and *hold* spells (normal MR, −2 on saving throw); SZ S; ML 15; XP 650; FF/52; spell-like powers: can *polymorph self* into the form of a juvenile white dragon twice per day for two hours each time (note spell limitations on abilities gained), cast *sleep* and *fear* twice per day each.

The ice lizard is in its *polymorphed* white dragon form when the adventurers arrive at the cavern. If it wins surprise or initiative, it uses its frost breath weapon, delivering 2-16 hp damage to all in the cone's 70'-long area of effect. The monster may breathe up to three times per day, with saving throws applicable to affected characters. The fact that it consistently does 2-16 hp damage per attack with its breath weapon may make the PCs wonder if they are actually fighting a white dragon or some form of illusion. A big dragon, after all, would be expected to wreak more havoc.

The adjustments in attack forms and hit points are unique to this creature and are not entirely the same as those from regular *polymorph* spells. Except for its consistent breath weapon (using a number range instead of basing damage on hit points or hit dice), the creature actually becomes a white dragon for all intents and purposes. Due to its magical nature, however, it cannot be subdued.

In the second round of combat, the creature attacks with a claw/claw/bite routine.

In the third round, it casts a *fear* spell as if cast by a 7th-level wizard (the minimum level needed to cast *fear*, which is an innate ability of this monster). Anyone failing a saving throw vs. spells turns and flees for seven rounds. See page 157 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* for the chance of dropping any held objects.

If any undefeated PCs remain in the fourth round, the monster casts its *sleep* spell as a 7th-level wizard (the hit die of the monster, in this case). This spell is a desperate measure, as characters of 4th-level and above will be unaffected.

If both sides are still engaged in the fifth round, the creature breathes again for 2-16 hp damage.

In the sixth round, it melees with claw and fang attacks.

In the seventh round, it casts *fear* again. The DM (who should have the idea by now) should use individual judgment for attack forms in subsequent melee rounds.

This monster may be slain by delivering 15 hp damage to it in ice lizard form or 51 hp damage in dragon form. Due to its summoned nature (having been acquired through a *bag of beans*), the ice lizard has no accumulated treasure, though it may have some by the end of the adventure—if the PCs are carrying any.

5E. Trapped Stairway.

> The tunnel abruptly opens onto a wooden stairway that climbs briefly up to a landing 10' above. A pair of double doors stands closed at the rear of this landing, while an opening into another corridor can be seen heading west from the top of the stairs.

If the PCs fail to detect the trap on the topmost stair, allow a 50% chance per character (based on the marching order) of triggering the false doors at the top of the stairs. A barrel-shaped boulder shoots out from a ramp hidden behind the doors to strike anyone still on the stairs. Damage to everyone on the steps caught by the roller is 4d6+6 hp (it's very heavy) but may be reduced by half if a character rolls his dexterity score or lower on 1d20.

5F. Wizard's Bolt-hole. This cave has been crudely outfitted as a laboratory. Three tables hold many of the spell components stolen from Certimfil, and his spell books are heaped on the table nearest the wooden throne in the northwest corner. Beside the throne is a collection of unstoppered flasks, each containing a wet, peaty mixture. Two alcoves hold depleted barrels and kegs of poor-quality food. The alcove nearest the exit contains a special keg covered and filled with yellow mold.

Yellow mold: Int nil; AL N; AC 9; MV nil; HD nil; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA poison spores (save vs. poison or die); SD affected only by fire; MR 20%; SZ M; ML nil; XP nil; MC (mold).

Artanal is in this cave awaiting the arrival of pursuers, if he's fled here to escape the PCs. Even if he's unaware of pursuit, he'll be alerted to intruders by the springing of the trap at area 5E. If not much time has passed since the PCs last encountered the wizard, his spells may still be depleted from the last encounter. If time has given Artanal an opportunity to relearn his spells, they will be identical to those already shown on his spell list (see "A Meeting With a Stranger" for Artanal's statistics).

Artanal keeps a *wand of lightning* and a *bag of beans* in this hidden lair. He'll use these to full effect in his final confrontation with the PCs.

The wand may be used from a distance, at an initiative modifier of +2, to deliver a *lightning bolt* up to 100 yards away. Damage (save vs. *wands* to reduce damage by half) is 12-36 hp (6d6, with each 1 rolled treated as a 2). The *lightning bolt* may set fire to combustible material, and saving throws must be rolled for objects (such as shields or breastplates) that withstand the full force of the bolt. A *lightning bolt* uses up two of the 30 charges in the wand.

In melee, Artanal may use the wand to strike a target, delivering a shock for 1-10 hp damage. Victims of this attack get no saving throws. Characters in metal armor or shields are treated as AC 10. Plain leather and wood armor work normally. Magic bonuses on metal armor do not affect armor class, but a *ring of protection* does, as does any dexterity adjustment. The shock function drains one charge.

Artanal uses the contents of his *bag of beans* in conjunction with the flasks of damp peat to form some very interesting grenadelike weapons. The bag is slung at his side, so the mage may use an initiative in which he's not attacking with spells or wand to reach into the bag and draw out a bean. In the same round, if unhindered, he can drop the bean into a flask of damp peat. The next time he gets initiative, he hurls the flask (make a normal attack roll) at his opponents.

If Artanal uses this attack form, roll 1d4 to determine the effect of each sprouting bean (reroll any duplicates until all four beans have been used).

Bean 1: A *fog cloud* of 30 yards in diameter appears, obscuring everyone's vision and causing all attack rolls to be made at −3. Saving throws involving dodging and evasion are at −3 penalty. Characters with blind-fighting proficiency attack at −1 and save at −1 when dodging and evading.

Anyone rushing for the exit has a base 50% chance of blundering into the keg of yellow mold in the alcove near the door (40% chance for those with blindfighting proficiency). The effects of the fog lasts for 20 minutes.

Bean 2: An explosion delivering 3d6 hp damage to everyone within 20' of the bottle heralds the arrival of an air elemental. The elemental has no space in which to create a whirlwind, but it uses its first round to blast the PCs with an enormous *gust of wind*, cast at the 16th level of magic use (all small fires extinguished and small items blown over; otherwise as per the spell). The elemental then leaves forever for its home plane.

Air elemental: Int low; AL N; AC 2; MV fly 36; HD 16; hp 80; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2-20; SA whirlwind; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ H; ML 17; XP 11,000; MC (elemental).

Bean 3: A hedge of quickly growing leaves sprouts up and covers an area 40' long by 3' wide by 12' high. The DM should locate its center where the bean bottle lands, as some PCs may be separated from the main group, Artanal may be cut off from the PCs, or the hedge may bar the PCs from getting out the exit. A man-sized passage can be hacked through the foliage in three rounds. Otherwise, the hedge remains for two hours before disappearing.

Bean 4: A medusa appears in the place where the bean lands. Have all PCs roll saving throws vs. petrification to avoid her gaze. The DM should roll for Artanal in full view of the players, declaring first the roll that is necessary for him to save (the mage must roll a 9 or greater on 1d20 to avoid petrification). The medusa disappears in the next round.

Medusa: Int very; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 6; hp 37; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA petrification, poison; SZ M; ML 13; XP 2,000; MC.

Concluding the Adventure

The adventure may seem to be over if the PCs capture or kill Artanal (see area 4 for discussion of these points).

Of course, the most successful conclusion to this scenario is the liberation of Nerick from the gemstone, the retrieval of Certimfil's spell books, and the imprisonment or destruction of Artanal.

Certimfil will certainly recognize the significance of the gemstone as a receptacle for a life force, as he has the spell *magic jar* in his own spell books. If the adventurers are having difficulty with this aspect of the scenario, the DM may allow Certimfil visit the museum and contact the PCs with his discovery of the gemstone's true nature. The adventure may then be concluded by transferring Artanal to the gemstone, freeing Nerick, and quickly placing the gem in a lead-lined, magically prepared container (supplied by Certimfil) from which the mage cannot escape. Nerick will be able to explain what happened to him in the mage's lair, though he'll have no knowledge of Artanal's movements in his borrowed body. His lycanthropy may cause further problems for the PCs unless they convince him to see the cleric Okinar for a cure.

Further Adventures

If Artanal escapes, there is plenty of scope for further adventures in which the PCs become involved in the activities of the mage.

More justification for further adventures may be discovered in Germad's journal, parts of which are written in code. Some of the places that the captain visited may lure the adventurers into further exploration.

Artanal's original lair has been mentioned frequently in this adventure. There may be several unexplored areas there in which the PCs can find adventure.

After assisting the thieves' guild in this adventure, a PC thief is approached with a commission to remove certain items from the home of a city official. The thief may find himself holding incriminating, historical, or magical papers in the course of the burglary, thus embroiling the PCs in further adventures. Ω

The Oops File

There is an error on page 8 of issue #24 ("In the Dread of Night"). The first paragraph under "Sisak Village" should begin: "Sisak is a tiny village located along the Westron Road in the Grand Duchy of Karameikos, about 25 miles *east* of Radlebb Keep."

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